



MODERN  
BRITISH  
LYRICS

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MODERN BRITISH  
LYRICS 



# MODERN BRITISH LYRICS

AN ANTHOLOGY  
COMPILED BY  
STANTON A. COBLENTZ



NEW YORK  
MINTON, BALCH & COMPANY  
1925

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## PREFACE

There are two obvious ways of compiling an anthology of verse. The first is to confine one's self primarily to the more popular works of the more popular writers; the second is to disregard names and reputations alike in the search for poems that will shine by their own inherent qualities. In the case of compilations covering material that has repeatedly been sifted and re-sifted, the former method will perhaps prove advantageous; in the case of compilations invading virgin or relatively untrodden areas, the latter system alone can be expected to yield results. And it is this plan, accordingly, which I have attempted to follow in "Modern British Lyrics." As in my American anthology, I have been guided by the realization that the contemporary field is still largely in a state of critical chaos; that the authentic pearls and diamonds have yet to be sorted out from the gems of paste and glass; that a large quantity of noteworthy work must inevitably escape notice amid the continuous inundations of the written word; and that too often an author will flare into prominence merely by accident or by a meretricious ap-

peal to the taste of a moment while others of more solid merit must sing in loneliness and obscurity.

For this reason, I have endeavored to make "Modern British Lyrics" representative less of those poets whose names are on every one's tongue than of their more numerous fellows who are heard only as voices in the wilderness. While I have not gone to the fatuous extent of excluding any writer simply because he is well known, I have striven not to emphasize that which is no longer in need of emphasis; I have aimed to consider the poem first and the name of the author afterwards if at all; I have sought at all times to avoid the great pitfall of the anthologist—the error of mere reduplication, of a barren republication of that which has already been abundantly made public. If in some few cases I have felt an irresistible attraction for poems that have previously appeared in anthologies, yet in general I have attempted to strike out for the trackless spaces, for the hidden byways and treasure caves of poetry, and so to bring before the American public the work of deserving British poets that might otherwise have escaped attention.

In this project I have been actuated throughout by a definite principle of selection. As the title of the anthology implies, I have restricted my choice to poems with a lyrical element; and, as in "Modern American Lyrics," I have confined myself to verse in the traditional forms and meters, making the quality of music the primary technical test of the poetic. But since the *vers libre* movement has taken root less firmly in Great Britain than in

America, and since the innovators in form and in particular the eccentrics are less conspicuous abroad, the lyric basis of the selection need not be emphasized as in the case of the American compilation; and I may limit myself to explaining that certain dramatic and narrative poets of distinction, and even some ostensible lyricists of reputation, have been excluded because their work has not that singing strain which has been the hallmark of every notable lyric writer from Sappho to Francis Ledwidge and Walter de la Mare.

Aside from the restrictions as to form and musical quality, the question of inclusion and exclusion has necessarily been largely a matter of individual discretion. Because of the size of the field, I have been compelled to confine my selections to the British Isles; because of my desire to make the volume essentially contemporary, I have given the preference to living poets or to those who might be living but for a premature death on the battlefield; and because the unexplored spaces are so wide, the darkness still so unsounded, I have perhaps had to yield occasionally to mere groping chance, and by inadvertence may have neglected poets quite as worthy of recognition as any that are represented. The restrictions of copyright, moreover, have played their ironclad and unfortunate part in the elimination of certain writers, and even in the omission of desirable poems by those whose names grace the table of contents.

But it is with particular pleasure that I acknowledge my indebtedness and my gratitude to those

authors and publishers who, by their kindness and courtesy, have lightened a task that might otherwise have proved impossible of consummation:

To Basil Blackwell (Oxford), for the use of poems by Gerald Gould, Roger Heath, Vera Larminie, and Madeline Nightingale.

To Boni & Liveright, for a selection from L. A. G. Strong's "The Lowery Road."

To Brentano's, for selections from "The Complete Poems of Francis Ledwidge."

To Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., for "Lepanto," by G. K. Chesterton.

To Jonathan Cape, for a selection from "Collected Poems," by W. H. Davies.

To Richard Cobden-Sanderson, for the poems by Edmund Blunden and Sylvia Lynd.

To "The Dial Press," for a selection from "Poems," by Margaret Sackville.

To Dodd, Mead & Co., for selections by Arthur Symons and Iris Tree.

To George H. Doran Company, for "The March," by J. C. Squire.

To Duffield & Co., for a selection from "Poems and Ballads," by H. de Vere Stacpoole.

To Lord Dunsany, for the use of "To Keats."

To "The English Review," for "Points of View," by Kenneth Ashley and "The Weather Vane," by Wilfrid Thorley.

To Henry Holt & Co., for a selection from "The Listeners," by Walter de la Mare.

To Houghton Mifflin Company, for a selection by John Drinkwater. (Used by permission of and arrangement with the publishers.)

To B. W. Huebsch, for selections from Edwin Muir's "First Poems."

To Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., for a poem by Oscar Boulton.

To Alfred A. Knopf, for selections from "Argonaut & Juggernaut," by Osbert Sitwell.

To John Lane The Bodley Head, Ltd., for selections from "Selected Poems," by A. C. Benson, "Up Hill and

Down Dale," by Kenneth Ashley, and "Orchard and Vineyard," by V. Sackville-West.

To Erskine MacDonald, Ltd., for "The Ancient Mother" and "Sea Madness," from Alice Hunt Bartlett's "Sea Anthology," and for selections from "Willow's Forge," by Sheila Kaye-Smith.

To The Macmillan Company, for selections from "Selected Poems," by Laurence Binyon, "Collected Poems," by "A. E.," "Collected Poems," by Thomas Hardy, "Collected Poems," by John Masefield (copyright 1923); and "The Last Blackbird," by Ralph Hodgson.

To Robert M. McBride & Co., for a selection from "Sonnets & Verse," by Hilaire Belloc.

To "The London Mercury" for "Happy Was I," by Edward Davison and "To-Day," by Everest Lewin.

To Thomas Bird Mosher, for selections from "Lyrical Poems," by Lucy Lyttleton, and "An Italian Garden," by A. Mary F. Robinson.

To John Murray (London), for "Elegy," by Robert Bridges, and for selections from "Verse and Prose in Peace and War," by William Noel Hodgson; "Songs of Angus," by Violet Jacob; "Poems," by Frederic Manning; and "Poems," by Meta Orred.

To "The Observer," for the poems by Ethel Ashton Edwards.

To Oxford University Press, for selections from "The Tryst," by E. V. Rieu, and "Windows of Night," by Charles Williams.

To Herbert E. Palmer for "The Re-Birth of the Soul."

To "Poetry of To-Day" (the quarterly new verse 'extra' of "The Poetry Review," Erskine MacDonald, Ltd., London), for the poems by E. A. Fielder, S. Marguerite Goode, Irene Petch, Miriam A. Coppinger, Edith M. Walker, Violet Le Maistre, Esther Raworth, Joan Warburg, Vera I. Arlett, Molly Young, H. Ross, N. J. Kessler, W. A. Lee, Nancy Pollok, Bertha Annakin, Helen E. Holland, and E. Joyce Harrison.

To "The Poetry Review," for the poems by S. Matthewman, E. M. Kelly, Robert Burness, Winifred N. James, Moley A. Paley, E. A. Renshaw, Marjorie Holmes, J. Slingsby Roberts, Cyril G. Taylor, E. W. David, and C. B. Tracey.

To G. P. Putnam's Sons, for "The Sword of Surprise," from "The Ballad of St. Barbara," by G. K. Chesterton.

To Duncan J. Robertson, for selections from "Wraith & Wrack."

To "The Saturday Review of Literature," for "The Snare," by Edward Davison.

To Martin Secker, Ltd., for the poems by Martin Armstrong, J. E. Flecker, and Edward Shanks.

To Thomas Seltzer, for selections from "Cæsar Remembers," by William Kean Seymour.

To Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., for "The City of Sleep," by Laurence Housman.

To Small, Maynard & Co., for "Absent and Present," from "Heart of Peace," by Laurence Housman, and for "The Dark Way," by J. M. Plunkett, from "Songs of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood."

To W. R. Sorley, for "To Germany," by Charles Hamilton Sorley.

To Frederick A. Stokes Company, for selections from "Poems," by Cecil Roberts (copyright).

To Muriel Stuart, for "The Seed Shop."

To Pamela Tennant, for "Lines on a Bullfinch."

To "To-Day," for the selection by James A. Mackereth.

To Katherine Tynan, for selections from "Irish Poems."

To Maisie Bell Whyte, for selections from "Sea Moods from Inland."

S. A. C.

New York, June, 1925.

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MODERN BRITISH  
LYRICS 



## TO-DAY

Alone To-day stands in the sun.  
—Why dream they, who their race must run?  
—Between two precipices steep  
To-day arises from the deep.

Athwart the deep abyss of night  
It stretches like a ribbon bright,  
Between the dawn and dusk it lies,  
Apex of two eternities:

To-morrow dim and yesterday  
Are lost within that twilight grey,

Only a slender patch of light  
Between the double jaws of night,  
While the full glory of the sun  
Proclaims To-day the only one.

*Everest Lewin.*

## THE IDEAL

The night is dark and warm and very still,  
Only the moon goes pallid and alone;  
The moon and I the whole wide heavens fill,  
And all the earth lies little, lost, unknown.

I walk along the byways of my Soul,  
Beyond the streets where all the world may go,  
Until at last I reach the hidden goal  
Built up in strength where only I may know.

For in my Soul a temple have I made,  
Set on a height, divine and steep and far,  
Nor often may I hope those floors to tread,  
Or reach the gates that glimmer like a star.

O secret, inner shining of my dream,  
How clear thou risest on my soul to-night!  
Forth will I fare and seek the heavenly beam,  
And stand within the precincts of the light.

And I will press beyond the curtain'd door,  
And up the empty aisle where no one sings;  
There will I fall before thee and adore,  
And feel the shadowy winnowing of thy wings.

So will I reach thee, Spirit; for I have known  
Thy voice, and looked upon thy blinding eyes,  
And well thou knowest the world to me is grown  
One dimness whence thy dreamy beacons rise.

Nor ask I any hope nor any end,  
That thus for thee I dream all day, all night;  
But, like the moon along the skies, I wend,  
Knowing no world below my borrowed light.

*A. Mary F. Robinson.*

## THE SAIL

To-day it is as though the rain  
Had no beginning in the sky,  
Nor touched the earth with its fine train  
But like a spectre slanted by.

A spectre that the lost wind blows  
To errantries that shape its own,  
And like a sail it swells and goes,  
And like a sail the wind is blown.

The hulls their ancient moorings slip,  
Thick ropes of mist the old woods trail,  
Earth moves, a ghostly-timbered ship,  
Behind that urgent, sweeping sail.

And some perceiving wraith am I,  
Who watch from a forgotten strand  
The shrouded ship of time sail by—  
A spectral sail in sole command.

*Cyril G. Taylor.*

## VISIONS

When in the blue dusk of a summer night  
I watch God's largess of His silver stars,  
Sometimes, it seems, the adamantine bars  
Fall from the tall gates of the Infinite;  
And Time stands waiting. Then I seem to hear,  
As one that listens from a lonely height  
To waters breaking on an unknown sea,  
The strong pulse of the world-heart throbbing near;  
The mists roll back, and for a space stand clear  
The great white windows of eternity.

*William Noel Hodgson.*

## A VISION OF BEAUTY

Where we sat at dawn together, while the star-rich  
    heavens shifted,  
We were weaving dreams in silence, suddenly the  
    veil was lifted.  
By a hand of fire awakened, in a moment caught  
    and led  
Upward to the heaven of heavens—through the  
    star-mists overhead  
Flare and flaunt the monstrous highlands; on the  
    sapphire coast of night  
Fall the ghostly froth and fringes of the ocean of  
    the light.  
Many-colored shine the vapors: to the moon-eye far  
    away  
'Tis the fairy ring of twilight, mid the spheres of  
    night and day,  
Girdling with a rainbow cincture round the planet  
    where we go,  
We and it together fleeting, poised upon the pearly  
    glow;  
We and it and all together flashing through the  
    starry spaces  
In a tempest dream of beauty lighting up the face  
    of faces.

Half our eyes behold the glory; half within the  
spirit's glow  
Echoes of the noiseless revels and the will of Beauty  
go.  
By a hand of fire uplifted—to her star-strewn  
palace brought,  
To the mystic heart of beauty and the secret of her  
thought:  
Here of yore the ancient Mother in the fire mists  
sank to rest,  
And she built her dreams about her, rayed from out  
her burning breast:  
Here the wild will woke within her lighting up her  
flying dreams,  
Round and round the planets whirling break in  
woods and flowers and streams,  
And the winds are shaken from them as the leaves  
from off the rose,  
And the feet of earth go dancing in the way that  
beauty goes,  
And the souls of earth are kindled by the incense  
of her breath  
As her light alternate lures them through the gates  
of birth and death.  
O'er the fields of space together following her flying  
traces,  
In a radiant tumult thronging, suns and stars and  
myriad races  
Mount the spirit spires of beauty, reaching onward  
to the day

When the Shepherd of the Ages draws his misty  
hordes away  
Through the glimmering deeps to silence, and within  
the awful fold  
Life and love and joy forever vanish as a tale is  
told,  
Lost within the Mother's being. So the vision  
flamed and fled,  
And before the glory fallen every other dream lay  
dead.

*A. E.*

## THE TRAVELLERS

A strange procession passes still  
Across the valley, up the hill,  
Setting a fringe upon the day,  
Where the path lies a little way  
Along the bare and windy heights;—  
A fringe that wavers all day long,  
Uncertain as the Northern Lights  
When days are short and frosts are strong.

Here at my window as I sit  
Watching the changing figures flit,  
I hear the fly upon the pane,  
The sweet birds singing after rain,  
But never any sound at all  
From those mysterious travellers,  
No voices harsh or musical  
Upon that silent way of theirs.

They never turn or pause to rest,  
But onward to the shining West,  
Like some swart serpent, fold on fold,  
The long procession still is rolled.  
But where they go, or what they seek,  
Ungessed beyond the mountain lies;

I see them slowly gain the peak,  
And slowly vanish from my eyes.

Where the blue heavens touch the hill,—  
Shade after shadow moving still.  
Yet sometimes in my dreams I pass  
With them across the meadow grass,  
And up the purple mountain side,  
Until the long bare ridge I gain,  
And see before me, stretching wide  
Between the hills, a quiet plain,

All beautiful with shady trees,  
And gardens, where the drowsy bees  
Make music in the ear of sleep.  
I see a broad, blue river sweep  
By banks where the wild roses dream,  
And swans and water-lilies sway  
With the slow rhythm of the stream  
Above their shadows, white as they;

And where the trees most shady are,  
A city, shining like a star.  
The river laves her marble quays,  
All marble are her palaces;  
The white rose in her garden flowers,  
And milk-white are the doves that fly  
About the gleaming marble towers.  
Then from my longing heart a cry

Breaks forth,—and all my dream is gone,  
Shattered and lost and overthrown.

But still my heart with longing stirs  
To join those silent travellers;  
And still I watch them day by day,  
That strange procession passing still  
Silent upon its westward way  
Across the valley, up the hill.

And in my heart full well I know  
I, too, at last shall rise and go  
To seek within the shining West  
That city of eternal rest.

*Duncan J. Robertson.*

## IMMORTALITY

### I

When other beauty governs other lips,  
And snowdrops come to strange and happy  
springs,  
When seas renewed bear yet unbuilt ships,  
And alien hearts know all familiar things,  
When frosty nights bring comrades to enjoy  
Sweet hours at hearths where we no longer sit,  
When Liverpool is one with dusty Troy,  
And London famed as Attica for wit. . . .  
How shall it be with you, and you, and you,  
How with us all who have gone greatly here  
In friendship, making some delight, some true  
Song in the dark, some story against fear?  
Shall song still walk with love, and life be brave,  
And we, who were all these, be but the grave?

### II

No; lovers yet shall tell the nightingale  
Sometimes a song that we of old time made,  
And gossips gathered at the twilight ale  
Shall say, "These two were friends," or, "Un-  
afraid

“Of bitter thought were those because they loved  
“Better than most.” And sometimes shall be told  
How one, who died in his young beauty, moved,  
As Astrophel, those English hearts of old.  
And the new seas shall take the new ships home  
Telling how yet the Dymock orchards stand,  
And you shall walk with Julius at Rome,  
And Paul shall be my fellow in the strand;  
There in the midst of all those words shall be  
Our names, our ghosts, our immortality.

*John Drinkwater.*

### SONNET

It may be that beyond our mortal view  
In a great factory on the outer verge  
Of outer heaven, a heavenly Demiurge  
Through the long ages shapes the earth anew.  
Perchance hereafter he shall raise his head  
Having fulfilled his task, while all about  
The lamps of the old Universe burn out  
And daylight waxes in the darkened shed.  
Then rising from his toil he shall fling wide  
The Workshop doors, and quench the lights  
that lurk

In windless corners, and his labour done,  
Shall stand upon the threshold satisfied,  
Beholding the new world, his handiwork,  
All-glorious beneath the risen sun.

*Roger Heath.*

## REFLECTIONS

How often have I gazed with upturned face  
And wondered at the miracle of night,  
That vast immeasurable vault of light,  
And marvelled at the swift unending race  
Of blazing suns and stars aloft in space,  
Yet knew behind them all there watched a might,  
A power which ordered and controlled their flight;  
And even this small earth could mark and trace.

When I consider this infinity  
A nameless terror clutches at my soul,  
Thinking of one whose unperturbed eyes  
These myriad, myriad stars of ours can see,  
And knows them fragments of a mighty whole,  
A little light in the eternal skies.

*W. A. Lee.*

## RHAPSODY

As when trees are shrouded in December  
Men recall the perfumes of the flower-time,  
So we sing a life we half remember:—  
How we heard in some primeval shower-time  
Liquid song of rain upon blue rivers:  
Dreamed on isles in windless oceans planted  
Where a dim green twilight bird enchanted  
Under domes of drooping leafage quivers:  
How we climbed, on many a hidden planet,  
Eagle-heights stirred by a starry breeze:  
Watched by confined kings in tombs of granite  
Where the darkness hangs like boughs of trees,  
Glimpsing in the reddening light of torches  
Ghosts of sombre vaults and looming porches,  
Cyclopean faces, giant knees:  
How we anchored in a violet haven,  
Seeking under light of unknown stars  
Mountains paler than the moonlight, graven  
Into shapes of pinnacles and scars:  
Where our boat set all the lilies swinging  
Sailed up rivers hushed and leafy-arboured  
And, in caves of hanging blossom harboured,  
Heard the sound of an immortal singing.

As when breathed upon, the ashen ember  
Blossoms into fire again and fades,  
So bright Junes flame up through our December  
And at random whiles we half remember  
Sudden gusts of an immortal singing,  
Ancient visions of remote crusades.

*Martin Armstrong.*

## BEAUTY

I sought for beauty in forgetfulness  
Of the harsh days, the mean and bitter hours,  
The eyes wherein a shrinking spirit cowers,  
The broken hearts, the forms of drab distress;  
I sought her in strange books where legends press  
In rich profusion, in the scent of flowers,  
Bird song and starlight, wooing the high powers  
For sense and certainty of her caress.

I found her not. Immortally diffused,  
No bloom or light or sound can prison her,  
No drug of legend make her wholly mine;  
She haunts the ruined hours, the lives abused,  
Distils her silence in the city's stir,  
And pours out sorrow as a golden wine.

*William Kean Seymour.*

## THE SNARE

Far away and long ago  
This trouble at my heart began:  
Ere Eden perished like a flower,  
Or Eve had shed her tears an hour,  
Or Adam knew himself a man,  
In every leaf of every tree  
Beauty had set a snare for me.

Far away and long ago  
Her loveliest song began to chime.  
Bright Hector fell, and at the stroke  
Ten thousand hearts like mine awoke  
In every age and every clime.  
She stood bestriding Time and Space  
Amid the stars, and lit the rose  
With scent and color, and she chose  
My country for a dwelling place,  
And set a snare in every tree  
Awaiting me, awaiting me!

*Edward Davison.*

## BARCAROLLE

Dark Hesper climbs the evening sky  
And sails grow dim on rosy seas  
And golden in the west there lie  
The Isles of the Hesperides.

The Night across the still lagoon  
Floats in her purple gondola  
And like a fairy ship the moon  
Sails, with a single Pilot-star.

The water laps the languid oar,  
Ripples and gurgles, croons and sings;  
Low through the dusk a troubadour  
Murmurs his love to muted strings.

The clinging darkness wraps us round,  
More tender grows the fragrant breeze:  
Shall not our own sweet isles be found  
The Isles of the Hesperides?

*S. Matthewman.*

## IMMORTALITY

One star upon the desert of the sky,  
One song upon the silences of night,  
Upon the tossing of the stream, one light,  
One moment in a blank eternity.

For, O my love, eternity is drear,  
And soon we both shall weary of it so,  
That we shall turn and hide ourselves for fear  
In that sweet hour God gave us long ago.

We cannot wander from it very far,  
For down the long wild ways, it calls us home,  
Red through the evening like a fallen star,  
A dim undying hearth for loves that roam.

I feel were I to meet you I might not  
Even know you in the street, nor you know me—  
You might look back and whisper, 'Who is she?'  
And I might sigh at something half forgot.

But in our Moment I can kiss your face,  
Smiling and strong—unchanged by all the years;  
And I can hold you there a little space,  
And you hold me—unchanged by all my tears.

And I can whisper to you of that night

When our dark boat made moon-swept waters  
hiss.

Your face was wet with spray, spray-white your  
kiss,

Your eyes were stars that I had set alight.

Dim planets hung above the trembling trees,

The suck of water shook the misty air,

The darkness showed you magic in my hair,

The darkness showed you rest upon my knees.

We saw two wandering stars fall through the sky—

'Twas you and I, lost in the chilly haze,

Apart, adrift, forsaken, but ablaze

With one short hour's eternal ecstasy.

And into our poor love of rags and tears

The fire of life and deathless love rushed down,

Rushed the great love of this world's million years,

Gave us the kingdom, set on us the crown—

Gave us all love of lovers since the morn

Of love in the dim daybreak of the earth,

Gave us all harmonies since music's birth,

Gave us all colours since the first red dawn—

Gave us the springtime with its changing tunes,

Gave us the mysteries of many Junes,

Gave us the stars, gave us the trackless sea,

Gave us each other to eternity.

Love may be gone, as you are gone, my dear,  
But our almighty moment cannot die—  
It shall stand fast when the last crumbling sphere  
Shall crash out of the ruin of the sky.

When the last constellations faint and fall,  
When the last planets burst in fiery foam,  
When all the winds have sunk asleep, when all  
The worn way-weary comets have come home—

When past and present and the future flee,  
My moment lives! and I shall hold you there.  
It lives to be my immortality,  
An immortality which you shall share.

One star upon the desert of the sky,  
One song upon the silences of night,  
Upon the tossing of the stream, one light,  
One moment in a blank eternity.

*Sheila Kaye-Smith*

## TO MY MOTHER

At evening when the twilight curtains fall,  
Before the lamps are lit within my room,  
My memories hang bright upon the gloom,  
Like ancient frescoes painted on the wall.

And I can hear the call of birds and bells  
And shadowy sound of waves, and wind through  
    leaves  
And wind that rustles through the burnished  
    sheaves,  
And far off voices whispering farewells.

I dream again the joy I used to know  
While straying by the sea that hardly sighed  
A sorrow in my singing, as the tide  
Crept up to clasp me, smiled, and let me go.

And I remember all the glad lost hours,  
The racing of brown rabbits on the hill,  
The winds that prowled around the lonely mill,  
Laburnum laughter, music of the flowers.

The berries plucked with loitering delight,  
Staining the dusk with purple, till the thought

Of starry little ghosts behind us caught  
Our hearts and made us fearful of the night.

The London evenings huddled in the rain  
Whose misty prisms shone with lamplight pale,  
Making our hearts seem sinister and frail,  
Fainting our thoughts with mystery and pain.

I have a world of memories to dream,  
To touch with loving fingers as a sigh  
Revives a little flame and lets it die.  
Ah, were the days as lovely as they seem

Now that they look so peaceful lying dead?  
And is it all the hope of Joy we have,  
The broken trophies of the things she gave  
And took away to give us dreams instead?

The things we love and lose before we find  
The way to love them well enough and keep,  
That now are woven on the looms of sleep,  
That now are only music on the wind.

*Iris Tree.*

## TO A DISTANT ONE

Through wild by-ways I come to you, my love,  
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,  
What way I turn I cannot go astray  
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may prove  
A tardy guide she will not make delay  
Leading me through strange seas and distant lands,  
I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.  
We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,  
In my life's space that I perforce did leave  
Love at the moonlit-trysting place to grieve  
Till fame and other little things were won.  
I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,  
Far will I wander yet with much to do.  
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,  
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods  
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song  
To one whose harp has suffered many a wrong  
In the lean hands of Pan. And when the broods  
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along  
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you:—  
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue  
Strong as the spring is strong.

*Francis Ledwidge.*

## WAITING

Every day you do not come  
A little bit of summer dies,  
A rose-leaf flutters from a rose;  
With less expectant eyes,

Every day you do not come,  
A blackbird from some lofty spray  
Watches another sunset fade  
And sings his heart away.

Every day you do not come  
Some clinging tendril is untwined;  
The sweetness of the heliotrope  
Is wasted on the wind.

Every day you do not come  
A little later wakes the dawn,  
A little sooner steals the dusk  
Across the shadowed lawn.

*Helen E. Holland.*

## WOMAN'S SONG

No more upon my bosom rest thee,  
Too often have my hands caressed thee,  
    My lips thou knowest well, too well;  
Lean to my heart no more thine ear  
My spirit's living truth to hear—  
    —It has no more to tell.

In what dark hour, in what strange night,  
Burnt to the butt the candle's light  
    That lit our room so long?  
I do not know, I thought I knew  
How love could be both sweet and true:  
    I also thought it strong.

Where has the flame departed? Where,  
Amid the empty wastes of air,  
    Is that which dwelt with us?  
Was it a fancy? Did we make  
Only a show for dead love's sake,  
    It being so piteous?

No more against my bosom press thee,  
Seek no more that my hands caress thee,  
    Leave the sad lips thou hast known so well;  
If to my heart thou lean thine ear,  
There grieving thou shalt only hear  
    Vain murmuring of an empty shell.

*Edward Shanks.*

## TO MY BELOVÈD DEAD

### I

In the profound and dreadful calm of night,  
Worn with the newness of my grief, I come  
Dry-eyed, and fall beside you, spent and dumb,  
Dreading the dawn, with all its aching light;

Dreading the day, and all it holds for me  
Of restlessness and forms that come and go;  
New things to do, new things to see and know,  
That were not yet, when you were there to see;

And shut my eyes, and for a while pretend  
That I can lean against you, feel your hand,  
Hear your heart beat, and know you understand,  
Though you are farther than the wide world's end.

Ah! My Belovèd, swiftly, silently,  
Surely your kind, kind ghost shall comfort me.

### II

It cannot be that you shall no more come  
Radiant with laughter, holding hands for mine,  
Seeking my soul for Love's most earnest sign,  
Meeting my thought with eloquent thought and  
dumb.

It cannot be that I must look for you  
There, where the Summer flames, and find you not;  
Of splendid sunsets know you all forgot,  
Nor find you in the rain, nor the sky's blue.

For here the lily all her sweetness yields,  
And all my heart is open to the sun;  
And, seeking peace in grief, the long day done,  
I find it in the silver, moonlit fields.

Then, by the beauty of the world I know  
That you are here, and will not let me go.

*Ethel Ashton Edwards.*

## THE RETURN

Far, through the quiet night, my Loved One came;

He said: "I have come back to you awhile,"

And called me by a most beloved name;

He held me in his arms, I saw him smile . . .

"We had too little time together, Love,

And so I have come back" . . . I held him close;

The inviolate night broke on us from above,

And sheltered us in darkness and repose.

I feared to break the silence, lest the spell

Of that great happiness were broken too.

We neither spoke: there was no word to tell

In language what we held so wholly true . . .

There came a gleam of silver from the lawn . . .

I woke . . . I lay alone . . . and it was Dawn.

*Ethel Ashton Edwards.*

## THE TRYST

### I

She will return, as surely as the morn:  
Death cannot hold her, nor the grave immure,  
Nor hope of saintly paradises lure  
To leave her love upon the world forlorn.  
But whispers on the early breezes borne  
Will voice her gladness; she will keep her way  
Across the stillness of the middle day,  
And all her beauty by the night be worn.

Joy as of old in her melodious moods,  
Who is made one with universal things,  
Will be his stay. And if to him she brings  
Her human sorrow in the rain, and broods  
Over the autumn magic of the woods,  
In such full griefs there is no room for pain,  
But wonder and the touch of peace again,  
And trysting in the haunted solitudes.

### II

Ah would that he might know the gentle way  
Death has with Love! Nor call his darling dead;  
Nor grieve that all his dear delight is fled

In starry new forgetful paths to stray;  
But in the precincts of the fretful day  
And through the peopled darkness be aware  
Of me, among the unseen watchers there.  
All else is granted. This alone I pray.

The garden of his heart with sun and shower  
I will besiege: my being shall renew  
The bloom of spring in every avenue,  
And move the languid air with a fresh power  
Of love, and shake each wind-awakened flower  
To murmur many a soft enchanted word  
In falling petals. Surely they will be heard,  
Nor his soul fail me at the trysting hour.

*E. V. Rieu.*

## ELEGY

The wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping

The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:  
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping  
Over their fallen leaves;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,  
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:  
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten  
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were spring-  
ing,  
And through the mossy bank shot bud and  
blade:—  
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,  
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;  
And now, in this disconsolate decay,  
I come to see her where I most have seen her,  
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,  
The fancy of her figure on me falls:  
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,  
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,  
A path of memory, that is all her own:  
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing  
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches  
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;  
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun  
staunches,  
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer  
planted;  
And birds that love the South have taken wing.  
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,  
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

*Robert Bridges.*

### THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

*Thomas Hardy.*

### THE STARLING

A starling whistles from the chimney pot  
And all my world, as by some magic spell,  
Is touched to loveliness: now quite forgot  
Are the drab streets; I see a dell  
Where happy wild things play, the honey bees,  
Rabbits with startled eyes and listening ears,  
Scared by the smallest whisper of the breeze  
That laughs among the grasses at their fears;  
Blue butterflies, like scraps of the blue sky,  
Flit to and fro, and with the singing stream  
A merry water-wagtail hurries by.  
O lovely ways, and are they but a dream!  
Sweet feathered conjuror, must my senses wake!  
Pipe on, lest this too tired heart should break.

*E. Joyce Harrison.*

## ON THE WESTERN CLIFFS

Out of the windy waste  
Of waters rolling gray,  
Homeward the red sails haste  
Across the bay.

Over the downs I see  
The summits black and sheer,  
When evening on the lea  
Is pale and clear.

There as the twilight falls,  
The seabirds float and cry;  
—Only the mountain walls  
Make faint reply;—  
Or with broad wing decline  
Down to their rocky home,  
Warm in the chilly brine,  
Nestled in foam.

Over the oozy weed  
The flying feet haste on,  
Hither and thither speed  
Ere day be done.  
For them the fry that dive  
Poise in their liquid bed,

They neither fear nor strive,  
Sleep and are fed.

Then comes the night, the end,  
What should their dying be?  
Death steals, a silent friend,  
Out of the sea.  
Under the rocky edge  
They close their languid eye,  
While shrill from tuft and ledge  
Their brethren cry.

Or where the stranded wrack,  
Rimmed on the stunted grass,  
Rattles so dry and black  
As the winds pass,  
The draggled feather flies,  
The frail denuded bones  
Bleach, and the sightless eyes,  
On the gray stones.

Under the weary hill  
The wandering footsteps cease;  
He that must wander still  
Envies your peace.  
Wasted by harsh events,  
Sighs to be large and free,  
Mix with the elements,  
And breathe, and be.

*Arthur Christopher Benson.*

### THE ROCK POOL

This is the sea. In these uneven walls  
A wave lies prisoned. Far and far away  
Outward to ocean, as the slow tide falls,  
Her sisters through the capes that hold the bay  
Dancing in lovely liberty recede.  
Yet lovely in captivity she lies,  
Filled with soft colours, where the wavering weed  
Moves gently and discloses to our eyes  
Blurred shining veins of rock and lucent shells  
Under the light-shot water; and here repose  
Small quiet fish and dimly glowing bells  
Of sleeping sea-anemonies that close  
Their tender fronds and will not now awake  
Till on these rocks the waves returning break.

*Edward Shanks.*

### THE ANCIENT MOTHER

Thou art the mother of all things, O Sea,  
From out whose teeming, pulsing womb once crept  
The life primordial, when green earth yet slept.  
How shall we sing, we that are born of thee,  
Thy age-old saga of maternity?  
We are rebellious children: thou hast leapt  
To snatch our lives again and we have wept  
And cried to heaven of thy treachery.

Yet still thine ancient beauties must we praise:  
The cries of birds in oceans many-isled,  
The strange sea-gardens, where the pale weed  
    sways;  
The taste of salt on breezes undefiled,  
And surf-artillery along the bays—  
O mother-sea, I also am thy child!

*Margaret S. Dangerfield.*

### SEA-MADNESS

I cannot stay in any inland place,  
The sea-song drowns the beating of my blood.  
I find no joy in any woman's face,  
My sole desire is the sea's grey flood.  
With eager arms I clasp the bitter wave  
That will not wait to quench my maddening fire;  
But laughs,—and passing spurns her pleading slave  
Who burns unceasingly with sick desire.  
Wave-buffed and belled with glistening foam,  
Eyes blinded, and lips stinging from her kiss,  
I stand, whose sea-born madness makes me roam  
Homeless where surging waters crash and hiss.  
No power may cure this longing for the wave  
'Till her cold bosom makes my restless grave.

*Periwinkle Cotgrave.*

## THE VOICE OF THE WATERS

Where the Greyhound River windeth through a  
loneliness so deep,  
Scarce a wild fowl shakes the quiet that the purple  
boglands keep,  
Only God exults in silence over fields no man may  
reap.

Where the silver wave with sweetness fed the tiny  
lives of grass  
I was bent above, my image mirrored in the fleeting  
glass,  
And a voice from out the water through my being  
seemed to pass.

"Still above the waters brooding, spirit, in thy time-  
less quest;  
Was the glory of thine image trembling over east  
and west  
Not divine enough when mirrored in the morning  
water's breast?"

With the sighing voice that murmured I was borne  
to ages dim  
Ere the void was lit by beauty breathed upon by  
seraphim,

We were cradled there together folded in the peace  
in Him.

One to be the master spirit, one to be the slave  
awoke,

One to shape itself obedient to the fiery words we  
spoke,

Flame and flood and stars and mountains from the  
primal waters broke.

I was huddled in the heather when the vision failed  
its light,

Still and blue and vast above me towered aloft the  
solemn height,

Where the stars like dewdrops glistened on the  
mountain slope of night.

*A. E.*

## FIRE-FLIES

### I

To-night I watch the fire-flies rise  
And shine along the air;  
They float beneath the starry skies,  
As mystical and fair,  
Over the hedge where dimly glows  
The deep gold of the Persian rose.

I watch the fire-flies drift and float,  
Each is a dreamy flame,  
Star-colored each, a starry mote,  
Like stars not all the same;  
But whiter some, or faintly green.  
Or warmest blue was ever seen.

They cross and cross and disappear,  
And then again they glow;  
Still drifting faintly there and here,  
Still crossing to and fro,  
As though in all their wandering  
They wove a wide and shining thing.

### II

O fire-flies, would I knew the web  
You have the weaving of!

For, as I watch you move, bereft  
Of thought or will or love,  
I fear, O listless flames, you weave  
The fates of men who strive and grieve.

The web of life, the weft of dreams,  
You weave it ceaselessly;  
A strange and filmy thing it seems,  
And made in mystery  
Of wind and darkness threaded through  
With light these heavens never knew.

O pale, mysterious, wandering fire,  
Born of the earth, alive  
With the same breath that I respire,  
Who know and think and strive;  
You circle round me, stranger far  
Than any charm of any star!

### III

Ah me, as faint as you, as slight,  
As hopelessly remote  
As you, who still across the night  
Innumerably float,  
Intangible as you, I see  
The motives of our destiny.

For ah, no angel of the stars,  
No guardian of the soul,  
Stoops down beyond the heavenly bars  
Our courses to control.  
But filled and nourished with our breath  
Are the dim hands that weave our death.

They weave with many threads our souls,  
A subtle-tinted thing,  
So interwoven that none controls  
His own imagining,  
For every strand with other strands  
They twine and bind with viewless hands.

They weave the future of the past;  
Their mystic web is wrought  
With dreams from which we woke at last,  
And many a secret thought;  
For still they weave, howe'er we strive,  
The web new-woven for none alive.

#### IV

And still the fire-flies come and go—  
Each is a dreamy flame—  
Still palely drifting to and fro  
The very way they came—  
As though, across the dark they wove  
Fate and the shining web thereof.

Yet, even were I sure of it,  
I would not lift a hand  
To break the threads that shine and flit—  
For, ah, I understand  
Ruin, indeed, I well might leave  
But a new web could never weave.

*A. Mary F. Robinson.*

## THE HARE

Through the pale summer grass I stare  
At the blue dome of sky;  
A soft, contented, couchant hare  
Hid in the grass am I.

All that I see a hare can see,  
All that I hear she hears,  
The wind's wave falling ceaselessly,  
The trembling grassy spears:

The colored patchwork of the weald,  
Unto the world's blue edge,  
Green field plaited with yellow field,  
Hedge woven with dark hedge:

And, on the other side, the sea  
Striped by the yellow grass,  
Where to and fro continually  
Small busy creatures pass:

Beetles as bright as lustre beads,  
Ladybirds red as blood,  
Green grasshoppers like little steeds  
Threading the tangled wood:

And butterflies upon the wind  
Blown past like withered leaves,  
Graylings, and all the heathy kind,  
And flecked fritillaries—

Their cool wings flutter near my face  
Where cupped in grass I lie,  
Domed with the blue and dazzling space  
Of fine cloud-ruffled sky.

I watch the ambling shadows pass,  
And bask without a care,  
With sun and sky and summer grass  
As thoughtless as a hare.

Till from that blue and friendly dome  
There comes a sudden breath,  
A shuddering breath out of a tomb,  
A messenger of death.

A sound, a smothering sound, that fills  
And fades, but comes again;  
Bruising the gentle grassy hills  
With news of grief and pain.

Oh, then no summer do I see,  
Nor feel the summer air;  
But think upon men's cruelty,  
And tremble like a hare.

*Sylvia Lynd.*

## WOUNDS

The wounded bird sped on with shattered wing,  
And gained the holt, and ran a little space,  
Where briar and bracken twined a hiding-place;  
There lay and wondered at the grievous thing.

With patient filmy eye he peeped, and heard  
Big blood-drops oozing on the fallen leaf;  
There hour by hour in uncomplaining grief  
He watched with pain, but neither cried nor stirred.

The merry sportsmen tramped contented home,  
He heard their happy laughter die away;—  
Across the stubble by the covert-side  
His merry comrades called at eventide;  
They breathed the fragrant air, alert and gay,  
And he was sad because his hour was come.

*Arthur Christopher Benson.*

## THE LAMENT OF THE MOLE-CATCHER

An old, sad man who catches moles  
Went lonely down the lane—  
All lily-green were the lanes and knolls  
But sorrow numbed his brain.  
He paid no heed to flower or weed  
As he went his lonely way.  
No note he heard from any bird  
That sang that sad spring day.

“I trapp’d the moles for forty years,  
Who could not see the sky,  
I reckoned not blind blood or tears,  
And the Lord has seen them die.  
For forty years I’ve sought to slay  
The small, the dumb, the blind,  
But now the Lord has made me pay,  
And I am like their kind.  
I cannot see or lane or hill,  
Or flower or bird or moon;  
Lest life shall lay me lower still,  
O Lord—come take it soon.”

*Osbert Sitwell.*

### YESTERNIGHT

Death has come since yesternight,  
I met her on the mountainside,  
Her face was haggard, drawn and white,  
Her robes were ragged and stripped of pride.

I met her near the farthest fold;  
I gripped my crook to bar her way,  
Then shrank before her eyes' strange cold.  
She passed into the twilight grey.

I watched her from the path below  
Climb the rugged mountainside  
I know not whither, but I know  
Someone in the darkness died.

*Elfyn Williams David.*

### THE RETURN

Slow to the precincts of the earthly mind  
With many a backward glance returns the soul,  
And dimly mourns for what it leaves behind,  
And has no pleasure in the distant goal—

Doubtful, as is a rower from the land  
When midway on the mere he stays his oar,  
And dreams that through the gloom he sees the  
    hand  
Of one who beckons from the dwindling shore.

*E. V. Rieu.*

## HAPPY WAS I

When the dead man opens his eyes  
On bluer rivers and clearer skies,  
On brighter flowers in fields more green  
Than any the sun he loved has seen . . .

What will he say seeing Beauty there  
Fairer than ever and yet less fair  
Because the hunger and hope no more  
Prey at his heart as they did before?

"Happy was I till the perfect tree  
Spread bough and foliage over me  
And shook to the grass beside my foot  
The lovely, pined-for, ideal fruit.

"Would there were hope of the grave again  
Whose mystery baffled the minds of men:  
Better the apples my own trees bore . . .  
I would that the worm were at the core!"

*Edward Davison.*

## THE GHOST

They told her softly I was dead,  
That she should leave me now and rest,  
But still she knelt beside the bed,  
Her hair lay heavy on my breast.

I heard her voice against my ear:  
"Not death, not death, but only sleep!"  
She did not dream that I could hear,  
Or should be hurt to see her weep.

For I was dead and could not speak,  
For I was dead and could not stir;  
Her hand lay up against my cheek,  
And yet I might not comfort her.

So presently she left her dead,  
They soothed her till she ate and slept;  
I was a ghost, and on the bed  
There lay the thing for which she wept.

I was a ghost, and had my place  
No more with her humanity;  
I looked on what had been my face,  
And thought it wore a smile for me.

But death was dark and very cold,  
And I was lonely and afraid  
Without a human hand to hold  
In this new life that death had made.

Till as I stood and shivered there,  
Thrust out from my humanity,  
There came a great warm rush of air  
Blowing the darkness back from me:

And there beyond the dark was light,  
And through the light there ran the way:  
I left my body in the night,  
My ghost went out into the day.

*Vera Larminie.*

## WINTER DUSK

Dark frost was in the air without,  
The dusk was still with cold and gloom,  
When less than even a shadow came  
    And stood within the room.

But of the three around the fire,  
None turned a questioning head to look,  
Still read a clear voice, on and on,  
    Still stooped they o'er their book.

The children watched their mother's eyes  
Moving on softly line to line;  
It seemed to listen too—that shade,  
    Yet made no outward sign.

The fire-flames crooned a tiny song,  
No cold wind moved the wintry tree;  
The children both in Faërie dreamed  
    Beside their mother's knee.

And nearer yet that spirit drew  
Above that heedless one, intent  
Only on what the simple words  
    Of her small story meant.

No voiceless sorrow grieved her mind,  
No memory her bosom stirred,  
Nor dreamed she, as she read to two,  
    'Twas surely three who heard.

Yet when, the story done, she smiled  
From face to face, serene and clear,  
A love, half dread, sprang up, as she  
    Leaned close and drew them near.

*Walter de la Mare.*

## REVENANTS DES ENFANTS

Softly, on little feet that make no sound,  
With laughter that one does not hear, they tread  
Upon the primroses that star the ground,  
Latticed by shade from branches overhead,  
Swaying in moonlight; but their footsteps make  
A twinkling like the raindrops on the lake.

The shy things that love silence and the night  
Are fearless at their coming; as they pass,  
Neither the nightingale nor owl take flight,  
So gentle is each footfall on the grass;  
They are a part of silence, and a part  
Of sweetness sprung from tears hid in the heart.

Their faces we may not caress, nor hear  
The little bodies that are soft as dreams;  
Their life is rounded by another sphere,  
They are as frail as shadows seen in streams:  
A ripple might efface them, but they keep  
Shadows of their existence in our sleep.

*Frederic Manning.*

## HAUNTED

No sound there is within the little room:  
The firelight glows; strange shadows crouch . . .  
and some

Are caught upon the window blind, and come  
And go, as folks pass in the outer gloom.  
So still it is in here; but in the street  
Shrill cries of children; footsteps hurrying past;  
Patter of tiny raindrops, thick and fast;  
A little gust of wind, sobbing and fleet.  
The lamp burns low, no breeze is stirring here,  
Time has no place within these dim, still walls  
That have known Sorrow, and a living Fear.  
I am alone, but there is One who calls:  
I am alone, but *She* my vigil keeps,  
That Unseen Other One, who weeps . . . and  
weeps.

*Molly A. Paley.*

## GHOST HUNTERS

I thought I heard small voices go  
A-weeping through the night,  
And then a pattering of feet  
In panic-stricken flight.

I thought I heard the moonlight rent  
By laughter shrill and cries  
That went with echo through the woods  
And crashing down the skies.

But when I leant into the night  
And listened, still and tense  
There was no panic in the air  
Nor any turbulence.

A silence lay on field and wood;  
A silence, breathing deep.  
Beneath a canopy of stars  
The world was fast asleep.

*Violet Le Maistre.*

## FAERIE

Under the edge of midnight  
While my love is far away,  
A wind from the world of faerie  
Blows between day and day.

And wandering thoughts possess me,  
Such as no wise man knows,  
Death and a thousand accidents,  
And high impossible woes.

Whether now in her pastime  
She turned a little, sighed  
With the heaviness of breathing,  
And even in turning died:

Or whether some cloud covers  
The lobes of the conscious brain  
And all that she knew aforetime  
She shall never know again,

But her friends shall bring her to me,  
Bewildered and afraid  
Lest a stranger's hand should touch her,  
A shrinking alien maid,—

Yet such distress in patience  
And faith an end may find,  
And a more fantastic peril  
Moves in my dreaming mind:

None knows how deep within us  
Lies hid a secret flaw,  
Where spins the mad world ever  
On the very edge of law.

Under the chance that rules us  
Anarchic terrors stir,  
Lest what to me has happened  
Has never happened to her.

First love in our first meeting,  
Changed eyes, and bridal vows,  
The incredible years together  
Lived in a single house,

The kisses born of custom  
That are sweeter and stranger still  
Than any clasp of passion,  
And the shaping of one will,—

Was it some wraith deceived me,  
And lives she still apart  
In her father's house contented,  
With an unawakened heart?

Now at this striking midnight  
Through the chink between day and day,

Has a wind from the world of faerie  
Blown all my life away?

Here am I now left naked  
Of the vapour that was she:  
While the true maid 'midst her kindred  
Has never thought of me?

For ten long years together  
Can a thing be and not be,  
Till it ceases to be for ever,—  
And has this chanced to me?

*Charles Williams.*

SHE WHOM I LOVE WILL SIT APART

She whom I love will sit apart,  
And they whom love makes wise  
May know the beauty in her heart  
By the beauty in her eyes.

Thoughts that in quietness confute  
The noisy world are hers,  
Like music in a listening lute  
Whose strings no finger stirs.

And in her eyes the shadows move,  
Not glad nor sad, but strange  
With those unchanging dreams that prove  
The littleness of change.

*Gerald Gould.*

## ABSENT AND PRESENT

Through morning meads we broke the dew,  
And heard the hidden skylark sing,  
Oh, goodly sound, when, having you,  
I wanted for no other thing!  
And ah, how plainly cried his tongue—  
“All grief is old, all joy is young!”

Through moving mists around the wood  
The daylight came in grey disguise,  
A pallid ghost. Then as we stood,  
I marked the hunger of your eyes;  
And all your thoughts had flown away,  
Back to the East and far Cathay!

For ever in your veins must run  
The rover's blood, so strange to me!  
You heard the call; you saw the sun  
Rise red across the Indian sea;  
So sundered stood we, side by side—  
Two fates which seas and lands divide!

And now alone through twilit mead,  
I break the dew: yet not alone,

Still, as the skylark sings, I read  
As fair a meaning in its tone;  
For now he sings of you, my dear,  
"The near is far, the far is near!"

*Laurence Housman.*

## THE NIGHT WIND

The night wind taps on my window,  
But you knocked on my heart's closed door.  
I shall always know  
When the soft winds blow,  
And my clipped wings are trying to soar—  
That out of the cool night shadows  
You knocked on my heart's closed door.

The moonlight falls through my window,  
And it silvers my chamber floor;  
When its drifting thread  
Creeps under my bed,  
Then I see you again as of yore—  
You stood in the throbbing stillness  
And knocked at my heart's closed door.

The darkness beats on my window  
And it leans on my heart's closed door;  
When its wings I hear,  
I shall always fear  
That you came: but return nevermore—  
Pass on through the dusky silence  
That curtains my heart's closed door.  
You pass on your way,  
Deaf when I say—  
"Wait! I have opened the door."

*Edith M. Walker.*

## LOGIE KIRK

O Logie Kirk amang the braes,  
I'm thinking o' the merry days  
Afore I trod thae weary ways  
That led me far frae Logie!

Fine do I mind when I was young  
Abune thy graves the mavis sung  
An' ilka birdie had a tongue  
To ca' me back to Logie.

O Logie Kirk, tho' aye the same  
The burn sings ae remembered name,  
There's ne'er a voice to cry "Come hame  
To bonnie Bess at Logie!"

Far, far awa' the years decline  
That took the lassie wha was mine  
An' laid her sleepin' lang, lang syne  
Amang the braes at Logie.

*Violet Jacob.*

## DUNSFORT BOG

To Cahirmone I walked one day  
    Away across the glen  
To where the busy stonechats nest  
    And foxes make their den.

The plovers wheeled above my head  
    As I went whistling by,  
And merry larks with hovering wings  
    Rose up against the sky.

And loud I whistled as I went  
    Along the heathered hill,  
Until I came to Cahirmone;  
    Then sudden I stood still.

For there, the lovelight in her face,  
    I saw my lover stand,  
But ah! 'twas not myself she saw,  
    Nor me she clasped by hand.

Then quickly hushed the bunting's song,  
    While dark clouds filled the sky,  
And dropped their tears upon the stones  
    That strewed the ground near by.

And back I turned from Cahirmone  
    Away across the glen  
By Dunsfort Bog where, it is said,  
    Lie many long-dead men.

And wet and cold the mist that blew,  
    And sad the curlew's cry,  
As I passed by the still, black pools  
    Where wild things go to die.

*Miriam A. Coppinger.*

### THE WATERMILL

I'll rise at midnight and I'll rove  
Up the hill and down the drove  
That leads to the old unnoticed mill,  
And think of one I used to love:  
There stooping to the hunching wall  
I'll stare into the rush of stars  
Or bubbles that the waterfall  
Brings forth and breaks in ceaseless wars.

The shelving hills have made a form  
Where the mill holdings shelter warm,  
And here I came with one I loved  
To watch the seething millions swarm.  
But long ago she grew a ghost  
Through walking with me every day;  
Even when her beauty burned me most  
She to a spectre dimmed away—

Until though cheeks all morning-bright  
And black eyes gleaming life's delight  
And singing voice dwelt in my sense,  
Herself paled on my inward sight.  
She grew one whom deep waters glassed.  
Then in dismay I hid from her,

And lone by talking brooks at last  
I found a Love still lovelier.

O lost in tortured days of France!  
Yet still the moment comes like chance  
Born in the stirring midnight's sigh  
Or in the wild wet sunset's glance:  
And how I know not but this stream  
Still sounds like vision's voice, and still  
I watch with Love the bubbles gleam,  
I walk with Love beside the mill.

The heavens are thrall'd with cloud, yet gray,  
Half-moonlight swims the field till day,  
The stubbled fields, the bleaching woods;—  
Even this bleak hour was stolen away.  
By this shy water falling low  
And calling low the whole night through  
And calling back the long ago  
And richest world I ever knew.

The hop-kiln fingers cobweb-white  
With discord dim turned left and right,  
And when the wind was south and small  
The sea's far whisper drows'd the night;  
Scarce more than mantling ivy's voice  
That in the tumbling water trailed.  
Love's spirit called me to rejoice  
When she to nothingness had paled.

For Love the daffodils shone here  
In grass the greenest of the year,  
Daffodils seemed the sunset lights

And silver birches budded clear:  
And all from east to west there strode  
Great shafted clouds in argent air,  
The shining chariot-wheels of God,  
And still Love's moment sees them there.

*Edmund Blunden.*

### THE WEATHER-VANE

O Steeple-Cock, stoop down to me  
And tell me what you see afar!  
*A sail that flickers on the sea  
No bigger than a star.*

O make your fledge a beacon, fowl,  
And let your wings be lanterns both!  
*Afar I see the tempest scowl  
And all the waves are uroth.*

Look well again, good steeple-cock,  
And can you see her lantern-spark?  
*Nay, now she runs upon a rock,  
And founders in the dark.*

O steeple-cock, say one is saved,  
One only lad, that shall not drown!  
*I saw a sudden hand that waved  
But once, and then went down.*

Fly, steeple-cock, with my true pledge,  
And say I love him, ere he die!  
*Too heavy is my golden fledge,  
Good lass! I cannot fly.*

Wilfrid Thorley.

### THE DREAMER

Tread softly by, shapes of remembered care,  
Nor stir night's gentle fingers from her eyes.  
She sleeps, and open to the vaulted skies  
The Earth sleeps with her: land and ocean share  
One dream; and on the darkened roads of air  
Her spirit mounts, where timid rays and few  
Steal down between the late and early dew  
From starry lamps by many a windy stair.

She moves in music through a lustrous land  
That needs no moon by night nor any star,  
Moves where the sources of the morning are,  
And doors that open to the dreamer's hand,  
And greetings dear as on the desert sand  
The voice of running waters. Wake her not:  
Those melodies, scarce heard, are soon forgot,  
And all the long-drawn leagues too swiftly spanned.

*E. V. Rieu.*

## HAUNTED

Dear Eyes that smile to me across the years  
How we have drifted, drifted! since the day  
When through an arrowy rain of April tears  
I met you down the arching woodland way!  
Under the swaying, wet wild-apple boughs  
You leaned and lingered, white as petals blown,  
And heart to heart, between our passionate vows  
    I held you, all my own!

Now I am old and tired, and Love's strong flame  
That lit our lives to ecstasy divine  
Burns faint and low; yet, speaking soft your name  
When twilight falls, I still can call you mine!  
For, dim against the dying firelight's glow,  
A gentle wraith, through mists of Memory  
As through the arrowy rain of long ago  
    You come again to me!

*Esther Raworth.*

### THE SHADOW

She loitered on the high road, she hastened in the  
lane,

At every turn before her the shadow turned again.

She lingered in the valley, she climbed across the  
hill,

But all the way beside her the shadow flitted still.

She came into the homestead, she entered by the  
door,

But close against the lintel the shadow went before.

She stayed beside the hearthstone, she took the  
wonted place,

But from the faces round her the shadow hid her  
face.

She lay beneath the yew trees, the earth upon her  
breast,

But on the grass above her the shadow lay at rest.

*Vera Larminie.*

## THE RE-BIRTH OF THE SOUL

(Written on the recent death of my aged mother in Spring)

Now what have I to do with Death?  
And what has Death to do with me?  
The winds are sweet with vernal breath.  
The birds are singing in the tree.

And yet she droops her hands—and dies,  
My mother who ordained my birth;  
And 'tis the mating-time of earth,  
Of linnet-song and cuckoo cries;

When every wing is in the air,  
And every seedling seeks to rise:  
And plants uplift their banners fair  
Before my sad unsleeping eyes.

Ah! Winter claims her for his own,  
For very tired and old she lies.  
Outside no wrecking north winds moan,  
Only within Life's Autumn dies.

Take comfort! Spring is even here;  
It struggles from this husk of pain.  
Time turns the seed-rind dull and sere  
That youth may leap to life again.

*Herbert E. Palmer.*

## IN SPRING

Wistful in loveliness beyond all words  
Are April woods when spring has crowned the hills;  
Heart-ache it is to hear the song of birds  
At twilight in the time of daffodils.

In the bright orchard when the wind was sweet  
I stood beneath the pear-tree mossed with green,  
A shower of blossoms drifting to my feet—  
Never such shining wonder have I seen!

Oh! beautiful the days beyond all words,  
Gentle the nights, when Spring has crossed the hills!  
Why then these tears to hear the song of birds  
At twilight in the time of daffodils?

*Molly Young.*

### ARCADY IN ENGLAND

I met some children in a wood,  
A happy and tumultuous rout  
That came with many a wanton shout  
And darted hither and about  
(As in a stream the fickle trout),  
To ease their pagan lustihood.

And in their midst they led along  
A goat with wreaths about his neck  
That they had taken pains to deck  
To join that bacchanalian throng.

And one of them was garlanded  
With strands of wild convolvulus  
About his ringlets riotous,  
And carried rowan-berries red.

And one, the eldest of the band,  
Whose life was seven summers glad,  
Was all in flowered muslin clad,  
And naked dancing feet she had  
To lead the sylvan saraband.  
With hazel skin and coral bead  
A gipsy dryad of the mead

She seemed; she led the gay stampede  
With fruited branches in her hand.

For all were bearing autumn fruit;  
Some, apples on the loaded bough,  
And pears that on the orchard's brow  
With damask-plums were hanging now;  
And much they had of woodland loot,  
Of berries black and berries blue,  
Of fir-cones, and of medlars too;  
And one, who bore no plunder, blew  
On reeds like an Arcadian flute.

They passed, and still I stood knee-deep  
In thymy grass to watch their train.  
They wound along the wooded lane  
And crossed a streamlet with a leap,  
And as I saw them once again  
They passed a shepherd and his sheep.

And you might think, I made this song  
For joy of song as I strode along  
One day between the Kentish shaws,  
Slashing at scarlet hips and haws.  
But thinking so, you nothing know  
Of children taken unawares,  
Of tinkers' tents among the gorse,  
The poor lean goat, the hobbled horse,  
And painted vans for country fairs.

*V. Sackville-West.*

## FINE EVENING

To-night the sky is like a rose  
Above the little town,  
A petal fallen from a rose  
The chalk-pit on the down.

The ancient vane is gilt again,  
And every roof is warm,  
And brightly burns a window-pane  
In some far distant farm.

The gentle hill, the gentle sky  
Lie close as close-shut lips,  
Softly and very secretly  
Day towards darkness slips.

And every tree its arms puts out  
To clasp the passing light,  
And every bud puts up its mouth  
To kiss the day good-night—

The elm-trees all on tip-toe stand  
Day's going to behold,  
Like little children hand-in-hand  
With hair of misty gold—

So slowly that she seems to stay,  
So slowly does she pass!  
But trace we may the steps of day  
Translucent in the grass.

To-night her going is as kind  
As if that she stood still,  
And we, by climbing, noon should find,  
Full noon, behind the hill.

*Sylvia Lynd.*

### THE LANE

There is a little lane that lies  
Far from the haunts of men;  
And O! the heart within me cries  
To tread its ways again.

Low is its voice and very sweet,  
—The young wind whispering,  
The lilt of song where waters meet,  
The call of birds in Spring.

Soft are its hands and very kind  
Outstretched to welcome me,  
—Pale honeysuckle boughs entwined  
With heart-leaved bryony.

Bright are its eyes and very clear;  
Starred in the wayside grass  
The golden-hearted daisies peer  
All smiling as I pass.

Pure is its heart and very wise,  
Far from the haunts of men;  
And O! the heart within me cries  
To hear it beat again.

*H. Ross.*

## REMEMBRANCE

O places I have seen upon the earth,  
Your silence is not virginal any more,  
For one still wanders there whose mortal birth  
Was mine. And now, gaze bent on buried lore,

A child, a youth, a man—O is it I?—  
In silence stands by every lake and tree,  
Or leans lost poring face where flickering by  
The bright stream moves on to another sea.

And all is changed, the shining fields, the host  
Of shapes who were myself years long ago.  
'Tis these who love! And I am but a ghost  
Exiled from their sole light and jealous glow.

Ah no, it was not I who, laughing there,  
Walked with the crowd, and there, in solitude,  
Wandered a summer's day through windless air,  
In a once-visited far-northern wood.

It was not I from morn till noon who went  
The white road's length to the white noisy town  
So many years ago. That light is spent,  
And he who saw it, long since fallen down.

And he no less, the child who, walking grave,  
Saw beauty of tiny weed, of moss and stone;  
And all his comrades, diffident and brave—  
They each have perished, silent and alone.

I can no more have speech with them, nor know  
The light which lights them. Vaster than the sea,  
The yawning distances o'er which we go  
On our frail paths of sundering destiny.

*Edwin Muir.*

## THE RETURN

All day the land in golden sunshine lay,  
All day a happy people to and fro  
Moved through the quiet summer fields; all day  
I wandered with bowed head and footstep slow,  
A stranger in the well-remembered place,  
Where Time has left not one familiar face  
I knew long years ago.

By marsh lands golden with bog asphodel,  
I saw the fitful plover wheel and scream;  
The soft winds swayed the foxglove's purple bell;  
The iris trembled by the whispering stream;  
Gazing on those blue hills which know not change,  
All the dead years seemed fallen dim and strange  
Unreal as a dream.

Unchanged as in my dreams lay the fair land,—  
The laughter-loving lips, the eager feet,  
The hands that struck warm welcome to my hand,  
The hearts that at my coming higher beat,  
Have long been cold in death; no glad surprise  
Wakens for me in any living eyes,  
That once made life so sweet.

Slowly the day drew down the golden west;  
The purple shadows lengthened on the plain,  
Yet I unresting through a world at rest,  
Went silent with my memory and my pain;  
Then for a little space, across the years  
To me, bowed down with time and worn with tears,  
My friends came back again.

By many a spot where summer could not last,  
In other days for all our joy too long,  
They came about me from the shadowy past,  
As last I saw them, young and gay and strong;  
And she, my heart, came fair as in the days  
When at her coming all the radiant ways  
Thrilled into happy song.

Ah me! ah me! on such a summer night  
In silence here together, she and I  
Stood watching the pale, lingering fringe of light  
Go slowly creeping round the northern sky.  
Ah, love, if all the weary years could give  
But one sweet hour of that sweet night to live  
With thee—and then to die!

The old sweet fragrance fills the summer air,  
The same light lingers on the northern sea,  
Still, as of old, the silent land lies fair  
Beneath the silent stars, the melody  
Of moving waters still is on the shore,  
And I am here again—but nevermore  
Will she come back to me.

*Duncan J. Robertson.*

## GOD'S HILLS

In our hill country of the North  
The rainy skies are soft and grey,  
And rank on rank the clouds go forth,  
And rain in orderly array  
Treads the mysterious flanks of hills  
That stood before our race began,  
And still shall stand when Sorrow spills  
Her last tear on the dust of man.

There shall the mists in beauty break,  
And clinging tendrils finely drawn  
A rose and silver glory make  
About the silent feet of dawn;  
Till Gable clears his iron sides  
And Bowfell's wrinkled front appears,  
And Scawfell's clustered might derides  
The menace of the marching years.

The tall men of that noble land  
Who share such high companionship,  
Are scorers of the feeble hand,  
Contemners of the faltering lip.  
When all the ancient truths depart  
In every strait that men confess,

Stands in the stubborn Cumbrian heart  
The spirit of that steadfastness.

In quiet valleys of the hills  
The humble grey stone crosses lie,  
And all day long the curlew shrills,  
And all day long the wind goes by.  
But on some stifling alien plain  
The flesh of Cumbrian men is thrust  
In shallow pits, and cries in vain  
To mingle with its kindred dust.

Yet those make death a little thing  
Who know the settled works of God,  
Winds that heard Latin watchwords ring  
From ramparts where the Romans trod,  
Stars that beheld the last King's crown  
Flash in the steel grey mountain tarn,  
And ghylls that cut the live rock down  
Before kings ruled in Ispahan.

And when the sun at even dips  
And Sabbath bells are sad and sweet,  
When some wan Cumbrian mother's lips  
Pray for the son they shall not greet;  
As falls that sudden dew of grace  
Which makes for her the riddle plain,  
The South wind blows to our own place,  
And we shall see the hills again.

*William Noel Hodgson.*

## THE WILD GEESE

"O tell me what was on yer road, ye roarin' norlan'  
Wind,

As ye cam blawin' frae the land that's niver frae my  
mind?

My feet they traivel England, but I'm dee'in for  
the north."

"My man, I heard the siller tides rin up the Firth  
o' Forth."

"Aye, Wind, I ken them weel eneuch, and fine they  
fa' an' rise,

And fain I'd feel the creepin' mist on yonder shore  
that lies,

But tell me, ere ye passed them by, what saw ye on  
the way?"

"My man, I rocked the rovin' gulls that sail abune  
the Tay."

"But saw ye naething, leein' Wind, afore ye cam'  
to Fife?

There's muckle lyin' 'yont the Tay that's mair to  
me nor life."

"My man, I swept the Angus braes ye hae'na trod  
for years."

"O Wind, forgi'e a hameless loon that canna see for  
tears!"

"And far abune the Angus straths I saw the wild  
geese flee,

A lang, lang skein o' beatin' wings, wi' their heids  
towards the sea,

And aye their cryin' voices trailed ahint them on  
the air—"

"O Wind, hae maircy, haud yer whisht, for I daurna  
listen mair!"

*Violet Jacob.*

## THE QUIET HOUSE

'Tis very quiet in the house  
Without the turbulent little flock.  
The sweet hours, quiet as a mouse,  
Steal slowly round the ticking clock.  
We gather honey while we may  
When children are at school all day.

So peaceful with the song of birds,  
The water lapping on the shore;  
But evening brings the flocks and herds  
And happy children home once more.  
Blessed the hour in sun or rain  
That brings the children home again.

'Tis very quiet in the house  
Where children come not home at all.  
The day goes stiller than a mouse;  
Gulls and the sea-winds cry and call:  
And two old shadows by the flame  
Talk of the days when children came.

Oh, when the children are away,  
The house is very still and sweet.  
But if no evening, gold or gray,  
Brought the quick kiss, the flying feet,  
Heavily would the silence press,  
The loneliness, the loneliness!

*Katherine Tynan.*

## LONELINESS

When graven is the tale of man's distress  
Above the tomb of all our humankind,  
Let there be told the torment of the mind  
Of him who knows the spirit's loneliness.  
Death ever changing, changeless comes to all,  
And love brings joy, all strangely wrought with pain,  
That he who greatly dares may greatly gain;  
But loneliness, whose cold imperious call  
Rings through the world to bid his chosen come,  
Stands jealous as some pagan god of old,  
Demanding sacrifice of grief and tears.  
Who hears his summons evermore is dumb,  
Who knows him lord, mates agony untold  
And trails a chain of bondage through the years.

*N. J. Kessler.*

## IN SEPTEMBER

Still are the meadowlands, and still  
Ripens the upland corn,  
And over the brown gradual hill  
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown  
With silent hearts now call,  
My rose of youth is overblown  
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds  
That leave the rain and grey,  
I hear the music of the words  
My lute can never say.

*Francis Ledwidge.*

## TUMULT

Through the storm and the desolate night there was  
far away heard

The cry of a plover that wailed like a soul with-  
out sight;

And a horror of darkness enveloped the land and  
bestirred

Through the storm and the desolate night.

As the wind in the trees goeth wistfully forth to the  
dark,

Like a querulous voice ineffectually pleading for  
ease

Must the Spirit be poured into sound to which no  
one will hark—

As the wind in the trees?

As the call of a bird in the night is the voice that is  
I;—

And hasten, O Dawn, and illumine me, Send me  
thy light,

Lest I pass as a gust in the trees, lest I utterly die  
As the call of a bird in the night.

*C. B. Tracey.*

### THE DARK WAY

Rougher than death the road I choose  
Yet shall my feet not walk astray,  
Though dark, my way I shall not lose  
For this way is the darkest way.

Set but a limit to the loss  
And something shall at last abide,  
The blood-stained beams that formed the cross,  
The thorns that crowned the crucified;

But who shall lose all things in One,  
Shut out from Heaven and the Pit  
Shall lose the darkness and the sun,  
The finite and the infinite;

And who shall see in one small flower  
The chariots and the thrones of might  
Shall be in peril from that hour  
Of blindness and the endless night;

And who shall hear in one short name  
Apocalyptic thunders seven  
His heart shall flicker like a flame  
'Twixt Hell's gates and the gates of Heaven.

For I have seen your body's grace,  
The miracle of the flowering rod,  
And in the beauty of your face  
The glory of the face of God,

And I have heard the thunderous roll  
Clamored from heights of prophecy,  
Your splendid name, and from my soul  
Uprose the clouds of minstrelsy.

Now I have chosen in the dark  
The desolate way to walk alone  
Yet strive to keep alive one spark  
Of your known grace and grace unknown;

And when I leave you lest my love  
Should seal your spirit's ark with clay  
Spread your bright wings, O shining Dove—  
But my way is the darkest way.

*Joseph Mary Plunkett.*

## PERSONALITY

As one who goes between high garden walls,  
Along a road that never has an end,  
With still the empty way behind, in front,  
Which he must pace for evermore alone—  
So, even so, is Life to every soul,  
Walled in with barriers that no Love can break.

And yet! ah me! how often would we break  
Through every fence, and overleap the walls,  
And link ourselves to some beloved soul,  
Hearing her answering voice until the end,  
Going her chosen way, no more alone,  
But happy comrades, seeing Heaven in front.

But, ah, the barrier's high! and still my front  
I dash against the stones in vain, nor break  
A passage through, but still remain alone:  
Hearing sometimes across the garden walls  
A voice the wind brings over, or an end  
Of song that sinks like dew into my soul.

Since others sing, let me forget, my Soul,  
How dreary-long the road goes on in front,  
And tow'rds how flat, inevitable an end.  
Come, let me look for daisies, let me break  
The gillyflowers that shelter in the walls—  
But ah! it is so sad to be alone!

For ever, irremediably alone,  
Not only I or thou, but every soul,  
Each cased and fastened with invisible walls.  
Shall we go mad with it? or bear a front  
Of desperate courage doomed to fail and break?  
Or trudge in sullen patience till the end?

Ah, hope of every heart, there is an end!  
An end when each shall be no more alone,  
But either dead, or strong enough to break  
This prisoning self and find that larger Soul  
(Neither of thee nor me) enthroned in front  
Of Time, beyond the world's remotest walls!

I trust the end and sing within my walls,  
Sing all alone, to bid some listening soul  
Wait till the day break, watch for me in front!

*A. Mary F. Robinson.*

## SURSUM COR!

Lament no more, my heart, lament no more,  
Though all these clouds have covered up the light,  
And thou, so far from shore,  
Art baffled in mid flight;  
Still proudly as in joy through sorrow soar!  
As the wild swan,  
Voyaging over dark and rising seas,  
Into the stormy air adventures on  
With wide unfaltering wings, the way he bore  
When blue the water laughed beneath the breeze  
And morning round the radiant beaches shone.  
So thou through all this pain  
Endure, my heart, whither thy course was bound;  
Though never may the longed-for goal be found,  
Thy steadfast will maintain.  
Thou must not fail, for nothing yet hath failed  
Which was to thee most dear and most adored;  
Still glorious is Love, thy only lord,  
Truth still is true, and sweetness still is sweet:  
The high stars have not changed, nor the sun paled.  
Still warmly, O my heart, and bravely beat.  
Remember not how lovely was delight,  
How piteous is pain,  
Keep, keep thy passionate flight,  
Nor find thy voyage vain,  
Yea, till thou break, my heart, all meaner quest  
disdain.

*Laurence Binyon.*

## EVENING

When little lights in little ports come out,  
Quivering down through water with the stars,  
And all the fishing fleet of slender spars  
Range at their moorings, veer with tide about;

When race of wind is stilled, and sails are furled,  
And underneath our single riding-light  
The curve of black-ribbed deck gleams palely white,  
And slumbrous waters pool a slumbrous world,

—Then, and then only, have I thought how sweet  
Old age might sink upon a windy youth,  
Quiet beneath the riding-light of truth,  
Weathered through storms, and gracious in retreat.

*V. Sackville-West.*

## ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;  
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.  
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,  
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.  
I take the book and gather to the fire,  
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute  
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire,  
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.  
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander  
Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your valleys  
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder  
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.  
Only stay quiet while my mind remembers  
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty, have pity! for the strong have power,  
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,  
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,  
Spring-time of man all April in a face.  
Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,  
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud.  
The beggar with the saucer in his hand  
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,  
So, from this glittering world with all its fashion.

Its fire, and play of men, its stir, its march,  
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,  
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch.  
Give me but these, and, though the darkness close,  
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

*John Masefield.*

### THE LAST MEMORY

When I am old, and think of the old days,  
And warm my hands before a little blaze,  
Having forgotten love, hope, fear, desire,  
I shall see, smiling out of the pale fire.  
One face, mysterious and exquisite;  
And I shall gaze and ponder over it,  
Wondering, was it Leonardo wrought  
That stealthy ardency, where passionate thought  
Burns inward, a revealing flame, and glows  
To the last ecstasy, which is repose?  
Was it Bronzino, those Borghese eyes?  
And, musing thus among my memories,  
O unforgotten! you will come to seem,  
As pictures do, remembered, some old dream.  
And I shall think of you as something strange  
And beautiful, and full of helpless change,  
Which I beheld and carried in my heart;  
But you I loved will have become a part  
Of the eternal mystery, and love  
Like a dim pain; and I shall bend above  
My little fire, and shiver, being cold,  
When you are no more young, and I am old.

*Arthur Symons.*

## THE OLD WOMAN

Oh! I am old, and sad, and sleepy-eyed,  
But I have known the dreams none ever knew.  
The stars have kissed my face, the dews my feet;  
But now the shadows come into my eyes,  
And I have half forgotten fairy ways.

But I will go and sit and dream of them,  
And dream of all the fairies on the hill;  
Until I see them dancing on the grass;  
Until I hear them laughing with the wind,  
And singing to me of a place apart  
Where cold white water gleams beneath pale skies,  
And mystic fir trees stand upon the hill.

I hear the light wind murmur in the grass;  
And in the trees I see strange gleaming lights.  
I hear a murmur in the rising wind—

“Oh! you are old, three times too old for us;  
But we will make you young and fair of face.  
Oh! fair and pale is water at the dawn,  
But fairest are the people of the hill.

“Oh! you are going, going; you are gone  
To where the fairies dance upon the hill.

Then you will dance with us in lonely woods,  
And you will sing beside the silent lake  
Until the wind has lost its song; until  
The mountains fall, and this old world is dead.  
Come with us, old, old woman, come away.  
Oh! sad, and grey, and sleepy-headed—come!”

*Marjorie Holmes.*

## THE COUNSEL OF GILGAMESH

"Gilgamesh, why dost thou wander around?  
Life, which thou seekest, thou canst not find."

*Epic of Gilgamesh.*

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?  
The sun that set to-night  
Shall climb the sky to-morrow  
And bake the world with light.  
Throughout the undying ages  
The sun shall set and rise  
As it hath set and risen  
From dim eternities.

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?  
Why vainly wander round?  
What canst thou find, O seeker,  
Which hath not long been found?  
What canst thou know, O scholar,  
Which hath not long been known?  
What canst thou have, O spoiler,  
Which dead men did not own?

The camel of the desert,  
The wild ape of the wood,

Tread the white bones of heroes  
Who in thy place once stood;  
Like thee, they felt the sunshine,  
Like thee, they loved the day,  
Like thee, they sought and suffered—  
And thou shalt be as they.

And other men, Gilgamesh,  
Shall seek what thou dost seek,  
And to their youth and ardour  
Thy rotting bones shall speak.  
They will not heed thy counsel,  
They too will wander round,  
And waste their years in seeking  
That which hath long been found.

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?  
Why vainly wander round?  
What canst thou find, O seeker,  
Which hath not long been found?  
What canst thou know, O scholar,  
Which dead men did not know?

And this was asked in Nineveh  
Thousands of years ago.

*Sheila Kaye-Smith.*

### A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

I saw it—pink and white—revealed  
Upon the white and green;  
The white and green was a daisied field,  
The pink and white Ethleen.

And as I looked it seemed in kind  
That difference they had none;  
The two fair bodiments combined  
As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,  
As one they both would lie,  
Made me move quickly on to her  
To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said: "Out there, to me,  
You looked so weather-browned,  
And brown in clothes, you seemed to be  
Made of the dusty ground!"

*Thomas Hardy.*

## DISILLUSION

I stood in Heaven at last and gravely scanned  
Sad angel hosts, their fabled glory sped;  
One placed a halo round my warrior head,  
And cast beneath his feet the shining brand  
Wherewith this arm had striven to purge a land  
Sin-sick and vile, and sorrow-visited.  
And now, alas! another in my stead  
Shall build the radiant city I had planned,  
And win the high renown for which I fought!  
I for eternity must lie and drowse  
In halcyon fields, my soul ignobly sure,  
Crowned with a misted circlet angel-wrought . . .  
For *him* the tilt, the fight, the great carouse,  
While I the turgid peace of Heaven endure.

*Winifred N. James.*

## LOVE OF LIFE

I cannot leave the splendor of the sky  
Or the dear whispers of the summer grass,  
The little, secret shadow of wings that pass  
Above moon-daisies, or the wistful sigh  
Of woods at dusk. Oh! Heaven is all too high  
When on the earth the infinite colors start  
And honeysuckle rushes to my heart . . .  
Leave me my human pain: I cannot die!

Beauty and Love in little moonlit ways  
Of silence; June, when roses flash to birth;  
Youth and the love-time of the summer days . . .  
Oh! Heaven is cold and Death comes all too soon.  
I cannot die when roses laugh in June.  
And You—and You—are lovely on the earth.

*C. A. Renshaw.*

## OUT OF WEAKNESS

To-day, as far as eye can see,  
Or thought can multiply the sight,  
In tangled croft, on upland lea,  
A message flashed along the light  
Has worked strange marvels underground,  
And stirred a million sleeping cells,  
The rose has hopes of being crowned;  
The foxglove dreams of purple bells;

No tiny life that blindly strives,  
But thinks the impulse all his own,  
Nor dreams that countless other lives  
Like him are groping, each alone;  
What dizzy sweetness, when the rain  
Has wept her fill of laden showers,  
To peep across the teeming plain,  
Through miles of upward-springing flowers!

The brown seed bursts his armoured cap,  
And slips a white-veined arm between;  
White juicy stalks, a touch would snap,  
And twisted horns of sleekest green  
Now shift and turn from side to side,  
And fevered drink the stealing rain,

As children fret at sermon-tide,  
When roses kiss the leaded pane.

The tender, the resistless grace,  
That stirs the hopes of sleeping flowers,  
Could shake yon fortress to her base,  
And splinter those imperial towers;  
Concentred, bound, obedient,  
The soul that lifts those dreaming lids  
Could mock old Ram'ses' monument,  
And pile a thousand pyramids.

*Arthur Christopher Benson.*

## HORSES

Those lumbering horses in the steady plough,  
On the bare field—I wonder why, just now,  
They seemed so terrible, so wild and strange,  
Like magic power on the stony grange.

Perhaps some childish hour has come again,  
When I watched fearful, through the blackening  
rain,  
Their hooves like pistons in an ancient mill  
Move up and down, yet seem as standing still.

Their conquering hooves which trod the stubble  
down  
Were ritual which turned the field to brown,  
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold,  
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh the rapture when, one furrow done,  
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun!  
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes;  
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes.

But when at dusk with steaming nostrils home  
They came, they seemed gigantic in the gloam,

And warm and glowing with mysterious fire,  
Which lit their smouldering bodies in the mire.

Their eyes as brilliant and as wide as night  
Gleamed with a cruel apocalyptic sight.  
Their manes the leaping ire of the wind  
Lifted with rage invisible and blind.

Ah now it fades! it fades! and I must pine  
Again for that dread country crystalline,  
Where the blank field and the still-standing tree  
Were bright and fearful presences to me.

*Edwin Muir.*

## THE SEED SHOP

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,  
Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,  
Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless, dry—  
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

Dead that shall quicken at the call of Spring,  
Sleepers to stir beneath June's magic kiss,  
Though birds pass over, unremembering,  
And no bee seeks here roses that were his.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams,  
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust  
That will drink deeply of a century's streams,  
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,  
Sealed in their shells a million roses leap;  
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,  
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

*Muriel Stuart.*

### THE GIANT PUFFBALL

From what sad star I know not, but I found  
Myself new-born below the coppice rail,  
No bigger than the dewdrops and as round,  
In a soft sward no cattle might assail.

And so I gathered mightiness and grew  
With this one dream kindling in me, that I  
Should never cease from conquering light and dew  
Till my white splendor touched the trembling  
sky.

A century of blue and stilly light  
Bowed down before me, the dew came again,  
The moon my sibyl worshipped through the night,  
The sun returned and long abode; but then

Hoarse drooping darkness hung me with a shroud  
And switched at me with shrivelled leaves in  
scorn.

Red morning stole beneath a grinning cloud,  
And suddenly clambering over dyke and thorn

A half-moon host of churls with flags and sticks  
Hallooed and hurtled up the partridge brood,

And Death clapped hands from all the echoing  
    thicks,  
And trampling envy spied me where I stood;  
Who haled me tired and quaking, hid me by,  
    And came again after an age of cold,  
And hung me in the prison-house adry  
    From the great crossbeam. Here defiled and cold  
I perish through unnumbered hours, I swoon,  
    Hacked with harsh knives to staunch a child's  
    torn hand;  
And all my hopes must with my body soon  
    Be but as crouching dust and wind-blown sand.

*Edmund Blunden.*

### THE SOULS' IN PRISON

I passed beyond the barrier of the tomb  
Into a cheerless land  
Where all was dead, as when the winter gloom  
Touches with icy hand  
The verdure of the earth's congealing womb  
And makes the rivers stand.

It was a realm of banishèd delight;  
(Nor nightingale nor lark  
To hail the day or close the eye of night—)  
A silence grim and stark,  
As when eclipse hides sun or moon from sight  
And all the land is dark.

A lurid twilight, as when sullen ground  
Or apprehensive tree  
Waits till the rumble of the thunder sound  
Foretells a wrath to be.  
So loomed the heavy stillness, and around  
Stretched a black, angry sea.

Nor sight nor sound was on that tideless shore,  
Nor any that made moan,  
And where I would, I wandered evermore  
(My will was all mine own).

And never, never had I felt before  
So utterly alone.

And then the agony of a silent voice  
Beat throbbing on my brain,  
"Lo! I am with thee, comrade of thy choice,  
For happiness or pain:  
Rejoice with me!" And at the word "Rejoice!"  
The blood froze in each vein.

"Here is thy portion, where a place is given  
For thee and me to dwell.—  
And I am of thy making: hast thou striven  
To mould me ill or well?  
For in Remembrance wilt thou find thy Heaven  
Or thine abiding Hell.

"Remove the threads that hold my veil in place  
(Threads from the web, Despair).  
O, fellow prisoner, look upon my face  
And tell me I am fair.  
I am the spirit of forgotten days,  
Ghost of the things that were.

"Come, from my brow the covering withdraw,  
And claim me here for thine."—  
The throbbing ceased: the veil I loosed in awe  
That face to unconfine.  
It fell—I shrieked and fled—oh! God, I saw  
The face—and that was mine.

*Robert Burness.*

### THE SWORD OF SURPRISE

Sunder me from my bones, O sword of God,  
Till they stand stark and strange as do the trees;  
That I whose heart goes up with the soaring woods  
May marvel as much as these.

Sunder me from my blood that in the dark  
I hear that red ancestral river run,  
Like branching buried floods that find the sea  
But never see the sun.

Give me miraculous eyes to see my eyes,  
Those rolling mirrors made alive in me,  
Terrible crystal more incredible  
Than all the things they see.

Sunder me from my soul, that I may see  
The sins like streaming wounds, the life's brave  
    beat;  
Till I shall save myself, as I would save  
A stranger in the street.

*Gilbert Keith Chesterton.*

### THE HAPPY TREE

There was a bright and happy tree;  
The wind with music laced its boughs;  
Thither across the houseless sea  
Came singing birds to house.

Men grudged the tree its happy eves,  
Its happy dawns of eager sound;  
So all that crowd and tower of leaves  
They levelled with the ground.

They made an upright of the stem,  
A cross-piece of a bough they made:  
No shadow of their deed on them  
The fallen branches laid.

But blithely, since the year was young,  
When they a fitting hill did find,  
There on the happy tree they hung  
The Saviour of mankind.

*Gerald Gould.*

## THE CAPTIVE LION

Thou that in fury with thy knotted tail  
Hast made this iron floor thy beaten drum;  
That now in silence walks thy little space—  
Like a sea-captain—careless what may come:

What power has brought your majesty to this,  
Who gave those eyes their dull and sleepy look;  
Who took the lightning out, and from thy throat  
The thunder when the whole wide forest shook?

It was that man who went again, alone,  
Into thy forest dark—Lord, he was brave!  
That man a fly has killed, whose bones are left  
Unburied till an earthquake digs his grave.

*W. H. Davies.*

### A CHANGE OF VIEW

They cut the trees, they dug the mains,  
They trampled all the meadow way;  
Left not a blade of daisied grass  
To lay cool hands upon the day.

A cry floats in the stifled air,  
The anguish of some wild, dumb thing;  
In muted misery caged and caught,  
While the green earth yet glows with Spring.

Now red bricks flaunt their insolence  
Like tawdry women of the town;  
Leering with cheap impertinence,  
Tricked out to please in garish gown.

And where was once blue space of Heaven,  
New-painted, horrid windows glare;  
Making a mock of beauty gone,  
Like empty eyes, that stare and stare.

*S. Marguerite Goode.*

## THE STRANGER

Two dismal lines of bricked monotony,  
A straggling weedy growth of chimney-pots,  
A crazy thoroughfare, with little clots  
And pools of oozy slime; no greenery,  
And here no happy flowers shalt thou see;  
No summer fruits, no sun-burnt apricots;  
Save these, these withered frail forget-me-nots,  
The little stunted babes of Poverty.

There came one walking down this silent street  
Whose head with many cruel thorns was crowned,  
In his right hand he held outstretched a wreath.  
And where he walked with naked bleeding feet  
There was no voice of birds, nor any sound,  
And by his smile I knew that he was Death.

*W. A. Lee.*

## RONDEL OF LONDON

To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.  
Here in the street they touched me as they passed.  
Sorrow and Hope and Terror flying fast,  
Life soon to bud, or, withering, soon to die.

And many more with troubled, speechless eye  
Into my heart their timeless question cast.  
To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.  
Here in the street they touched me as they passed.

The spires consumed in sunset, ceaselessly  
The traffic surged with sob and trumpet blast.  
Dusty, ensnared, immortal, driven fast  
They raised their faces to the evening sky.—  
To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.

*Lucy Lyttelton.*

ON A HOUSE BEING PULLED DOWN

Against the sky the house uplifts  
A skeleton, whence paper-drifts  
A tattered testimony bear  
That men lived there.

There they in fierce embrace were sown  
And there they strove and grieved alone,  
Till, gaping-mouthed and sightless-eyed,  
Alone they died.

Upon each old enkindled grate  
Looking, I seem to violate  
Some hour of bitterness lived through  
That no man knew.

I shrink as one that unawares  
Has chanced upon a soul that bares  
A nakedness, whereon may pry  
Each passer-by.

*J. Slingsby Roberts.*

## POINTS OF VIEW

The Caveman looked at the Forest  
And knew that it was good:  
Many kinds of trees grew there  
And each had different wood.

Oak, that was tough and would not yield,  
With branches stiff and stub;  
Ash that would rive and make good stones  
For hunting spear or club.

Holly, milk-white and bitter-hard,  
That keenest edge would turn;  
Willow one could twist like rope;  
Pine that was good to burn.

Elder and hawthorn, bending yew,  
Frow elm and bark-grained beech.  
Every kind of tree he knew  
And had a use for each.

The Caveman looked at the Forest  
And knew what harbored there,  
What fowls and beasts were good to eat,  
Or had good skins to wear.

He knew each furred and feathered thing  
That still in greenwood goes,  
The mammoths and great hornèd beasts  
That earth no longer knows—

The Caveman looked at the Forest  
And trembled as he stood:  
For gods and demons moved within  
The dim mysterious wood:

God of tall tree and god of brake,  
God of bush and brier;  
The Caveman knew and feared them all  
And shivered by his fire—

The Caveman looked at the Forest  
Mysterious dim and high—  
And many uncouth things he saw;  
But naught so queer as I.

As I, who at the forest  
Gaze hard, nor see the wood:  
I see the Caveman by his cave,  
I stand where once he stood.

I see the Caveman by his cave,  
Finding his soul in prayer.  
I see the Caveman by his cave,  
Who never saw me there.

I see the Caveman by his cave,  
I see the years between:

The dim mysterious teeming years  
Where always Man has been.

I see the Caveman by his cave  
As at the wood he peers;  
I see the devils and the gods  
Of twice ten thousand years—

A dazed bewildered thing I stand  
Confused by memories—  
Who scarcely can tell oak from ash,  
Nor see the wood—for trees.

*Kenneth H. Ashley.*

QUOD SEMPER

CHILD

What wind is this across the roofs so softly makes  
his way,  
That hardly makes the wires to sing, or soaring  
smoke to sway?

WIND

I am a weary southern wind that blows the livelong  
day  
Over the stones of Babylon,  
Babylon, Babylon,  
The ruined walls of Babylon, all fallen in decay.

Oh, I have blown o'er Babylon when royal was her  
state,  
When fifty men in gold and steel kept watch at  
every gate,  
When merchant-men and boys and maids thronged  
early by and late  
Under the gates of Babylon,  
Babylon, Babylon,  
The marble gates of Babylon, when Babylon was  
great.

## CHILD

Good weary wind, a little while pray let your course  
    be stayed,  
And tell me of the talk they held and what the  
    people said,  
The funny folk of Babylon before that they were  
    dead,  
    That walked abroad in Babylon,  
    Babylon, Babylon,  
Before the towers of Babylon along the ground  
    were laid.

## WIND

The folk that walked in Babylon, they talked of  
    wind and rain,  
Of ladies' looks, of learned books, of merchants'  
    loss and gain,  
How such-an-one loved such-a-maid that loved him  
    not again  
    (For maids were fair in Babylon,  
    Babylon, Babylon),  
Also the poor in Babylon of hunger did complain.

## CHILD

But this is what the people say as on their way they  
    go,  
Under my window in the street, I heard them down  
    below.

## WIND

What other should men talk about five thousand  
years ago?

For men they were in Babylon,  
Babylon, Babylon,  
That now are dust in Babylon I scatter to-and-fro.

*Lucy Lyttelton.*

## THE SPHINX

Ere days were days upon the earth  
The Lord Almighty laid His hand.  
I rose an everlasting hill,  
And round my feet I felt the sand.  
I felt upon my sightless brows  
The child-winds leaning in their play,  
Felt the first ripple of the Nile  
Slip through my stones its seaward way.

Some came and shaped me brows and breast.  
They gave me hearing, lips and eyes.  
I heard the clanging of their gongs,  
Smelt savor of their sacrifice.  
I saw the kings in golden prow  
Row with the flood to crown or bride,  
I heard the wailing when they came  
Back to the tomb, against the tide.

There passed a word between the winds.  
They stirred the plains beyond the West.  
The sands rose high behind my head,  
The sands surged up against my breast.  
The two waves meeting on my brows,  
I waited, hidden in my place,

Till man remembered me again  
And swept the sand from off my face.

Now Nile is far, and knows me not,  
The desert sands remorseless rise,  
My head is battered by the men  
That used to make me sacrifice.  
I lift my smitten brows and wait.  
Men pass as prints of summer rain.  
Nile will remember and return  
To flow before my feet again.

*Lucy Lyttelton.*

## WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

We are they who come faster than fate: we are  
they who ride early or late:

We storm at your ivory gate: Pale Kings of the  
Sunset, beware!

Not on silk nor on samite we lie, not in curtained  
solemnity die

Among women who chatter and cry, and children  
who mumble a prayer.

But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise  
with a shout, and we tramp

With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray  
of the wind in our hair.

From the lands where the elephants are, to the forts  
of Merou and Balghar,

Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on  
the ruins of Rum.

We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by  
God we will go there again;

We have stood on the shore of the plain where the  
Waters of Destiny boom.

A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where men  
were afraid,

For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was  
a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured  
not a few of ambition,

And drave not a few to perdition with medicine  
bitter and strong:

And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright  
as a desolate pool,

And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their  
cavalry thundered along:

For the coward was drowned with the brave when  
our battle sheered up like a wave,

And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to  
God in our song.

*James Elroy Flecker.*

## THE MARCH

I heard a voice that cried, "Make way for those  
who died!"

And all the coloured crowd like ghosts at morning  
fled;

And down the waiting road, rank after rank there  
strode

In mute and measured march a hundred thousand  
dead.

A hundred thousand dead, with firm and noiseless  
tread,

All shadowy-grey yet solid, with faces grey and  
ghast,

And by the house they went, and all their brows  
were bent

Straight forward; and they passed, and passed, and  
passed, and passed.

But O there came a place, and O there came a face,  
That clenched my heart to see it, and sudden turned  
my way;

And in the Face that turned I saw two eyes that  
burned,

Never-forgotten eyes, and they had things to say.

Like desolate stars they shone one moment, and  
were gone  
And I sank down and put my arms across my head,  
And felt them moving past, nor looked to see the  
last,  
In steady silent march, our hundred thousand dead.

*J. C. Squire.*

### A FALLEN SOLDIER

Hope held his hand and ran with him together.  
Despair, the coward, at their coming fled.  
Like a young ram, he shook his hornèd head,  
And broke away from his restraining tether.  
He loved the sea, he loved the cleansing flame;  
No woman yet, his heart was all too young;  
Over the plain of life his heart was flung,  
Seeking for jeopardies that he might tame.  
He cloaked his faith with laughter, but his faith  
Was certain, as his confidence was gay,  
And laughing went he, till on his last day  
His hands stretched out to life were clasped by  
death.

*V. Sackville-West.*

## ELEGY

(For J. N., died of wounds, October, 1916)

So you are dead. We lived three months together,  
But in these years how absence can divide!  
We did not meet again. I wonder whether  
You thought of me at all before you died.

There in that whirl of unaccustomed faces,  
Strange, friendless, ill, I found in you a friend—  
And then at last in these divided places,  
For you in France and here for me the end.

For friendship's memory was short and faithless  
And time went by that will not come again,  
And you are dead of wounds and I am scatheless  
Save as my heart has sorrowed for my slain.

I wonder whether you were long in dying,  
Where, in what trench and under what dim star,  
With drawn face on the clayey bottom lying,  
While still the untiring guns cried out afar.

I might have been with you, I might have seen you  
Reel to the shot with blank and staring eye,

I might have held you up. . . . I might have been  
you  
And lain instead of you where now you lie.

Here in our quietude strange fancy presses,  
Dark thoughts of woe upon the empty brain,  
And fills the streets and the pleasant wildernesses  
With forms of death and ugly shapes of pain.

You are long dead. A year is nearly over,  
But still your voice leaps out again amid  
The tangled memories that lie and cover  
With countless trails what then we said and did.

And still in waking dreams I sit and ponder  
Pleasures that were and, as my working brain  
Deeper in revery will stray and wander,  
I think that I shall meet with you again

And make my plans and half arrange the meeting,  
And half think out the words that will be said  
After the first brief, careless, pleasant greet-  
ing . . .  
Then suddenly I remember you are dead.

*Edward Shanks.*

## TO GERMANY

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,  
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.  
But, gropers both through fields of thought confined,  
We stumble and we do not understand.  
You only saw your future bigly planned,  
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,  
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,  
And hiss and hate, and the blind fight the blind.  
When it is peace, then we may view again  
With new-won eyes each other's truer form,  
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm,  
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,  
When it is peace. But, until peace, the storm,  
The darkness, and the thunder and the rain.

*Charles Hamilton Sorley.*

## ALIEN ENEMIES

*(The German mother speaks to the English mother)*

On the cold frontier-line of death  
I won my man-child blood and breath:  
At a great price, in gulfs of night,  
Purchased the morning for his sight,  
And in a silence big with fear  
Fore-wrought the musics he should hear.

And you?—ah, who should know but I  
The wings of death that beat so nigh,  
The deathly dark, the deathly dews,  
The soul that will not yet refuse,  
And all you risked, and all you paid,  
When out of you your son was made?

Your son and mine in love were bred,  
Your son and mine in hate are dead,  
Yet never hated, never knew  
The sense of what they had to do,  
But perished, brother slain by brother,  
Who might as well have loved each other.  
The happy hands, too good to put

To the red business of the brute;  
The candid eyes that death's release  
Found peopled with my dreams of peace;  
The hope beneath the heart that grew—  
Ah, who should know them if not you?

Dear mother of a murdered son,  
Ours is the end by us begun!  
Ours is the strength the guns called up,  
And ours it is to drink the cup  
Of childless days, of childless years,  
Salt with the taste of blood and tears.

Dear murdered mother!—still to die  
The women's regiments go by:  
No music of the march for them,  
And for their souls no requiem,  
When, 'mid the screaming of the guns,  
The mothers perish in their sons.

And we are foes, or so they tell me—  
But in the wonder that befell me,  
When, solitary soldier, I  
Fought for the life so soon to die—  
When out of night I brought, I won,  
My morning-star, my little son—  
When at the utter risk and cost  
I gained the solace I have lost—

When underneath my opening eyes  
Lay that which now all altered lies—

When to my warm and passionate breast  
I held the limbs now cold in rest —  
I knew one peace that shall not end,  
And every mother for my friend.

*Gerald Gould.*

## PIERROT AT THE WAR

The leaden years have dragged themselves away;  
The blossoms of the world lie all dashed down  
And flattened by the hurricane of death:  
The roses fallen, and their fragrant breath  
Has passed beyond our senses—and we drown  
Our tragic thoughts; confine them to the day.

Pierrot was happy here two years ago,  
Singing through all the summer-scented hours,  
Dancing throughout the warm moon-haunted night.  
Swan-like his floating sleeves, so long and white,  
Sailed the blue waters of the dusk. Wan flowers,  
Like moons, perfumed the crystal valley far below.

But now these moonlit sleeves lie on the ground,  
Trampled and torn from many a deadly fight.  
With fingers clenched, and face a mask of stone,  
He gazes at the sky—left all alone—  
Grimacing under every rising light:  
His body waits the peace his soul has found.

*Osbert Sitwell.*

## LEPANTO

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,  
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they  
run;

There is laughter like the fountains in the face of  
all men feared,

It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his  
beard,

It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his  
lips,

For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with  
his ships.

They have dared the white republics up the capes  
of Italy,

They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of  
the Sea,

And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony  
and loss,

And called the kings of Christendom for swords  
about the Cross.

The cold queen of England is looking in the  
glass;

The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the  
Mass;

From evening isles fantastical rings faint the  
Spanish gun,  
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in  
the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,  
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince  
has stirred,  
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attained  
stall,  
The last Knight of Europe takes weapons from the  
wall,  
The last and lingering troubadour to whom no bird  
has sung,  
That once went singing southward when all the  
world was young.

In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,  
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the  
Crusade.

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,  
Don John of Austria is going to the war,  
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold  
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,  
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,  
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the  
cannon, and he comes.

Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,  
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the  
world,  
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.  
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!

Death-light of Africa!  
Don John of Austria  
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is his Paradise above the evening star.  
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)  
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's  
    knees,  
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.  
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his  
    ease,  
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller  
    than the trees,  
And his voice through all the garden is a thunder  
    sent to bring  
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.  
Giants and the Genii,  
Multiplex of wing and eye,  
Whose strong obedience broke the sky  
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of  
    the morn,  
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their  
    eyes in scorn;  
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells  
    of the sea  
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless crea-  
    tures be;  
On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-  
    forests curl,

Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of  
the pearl;  
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks  
of the ground,—  
They gather and they wonder and give worship to  
Mahound.  
And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the  
hermit-folk can hide,  
And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint  
abide,  
And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not  
giving rest,  
For that which was our trouble comes again out of  
the west.  
We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under  
sun,  
Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of  
things done,  
But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains,  
and I know  
The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred  
years ago:  
It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows  
not Fate;  
It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the  
gate!  
It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the  
wager worth,  
Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be  
on the earth."  
For he heard guns groaning, and he heard guns jar,

(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)

Sudden and still—hurrah!

Bolt from Iberia!

Don John of Austria

Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his mountain in the sea-roads of  
the north

(*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)

Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift  
And the sea-folk labor and the red sails lift.

He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings  
of stone;

The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is  
gone alone;

The North is full of tangled things and texts and  
aching eyes

And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,  
And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty  
room,

And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer  
face of doom,

And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in  
Galilee,

But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.

Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse,  
Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his  
lips,

Trumpet that sayeth *ha!*

*Domino gloria!*

Don John of Austria  
Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his  
neck

*(Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.)*

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and  
soft as sin,

And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs  
creep in.

He holds a crystal phial that has colors like the  
moon,

He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very  
soon,

And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and  
grey,

Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered  
from the day,

And death is in the phial and the end of noble work,

But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.

Don John's hunting and his hounds have bayed—

Booms away past Italy the rumor of his raid.

Gun upon gun, ha! ha!

Gun upon gun, hurrah!

Don John of Austria

Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle  
broke,

*(Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.)*

The hidden room in man's house where God sits all  
the year,  
The secret window whence the world looks small  
and very dear.  
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea  
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is  
mystery;  
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross  
and Castle dark,  
They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St.  
Mark;  
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-  
bearded chiefs,  
And below the ships are prisons where, with multi-  
tudinous griefs,  
Christian captives sick and sunless, all a laboring  
race repines  
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the  
mines.  
They are lost like slaves that sweat, and in the skies  
of morning hung  
The stairways of the tallest gods when tyranny was  
young.  
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those  
fallen or fleeing on  
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of  
Babylon.  
And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in  
hell  
Where a yellow face looks inward through the  
lattice of his cell,

And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no  
more a sign—

*(But Don John of Austria has burst the battle  
line!)*

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted  
poop,

Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,  
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,  
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the  
holds,

Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea,  
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for  
liberty.

*Vivat Hispania!*

*Domino Gloria!*

Don John of Austria

Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the  
sheath

*(Don John of Austria rides honored with a wreath.)*

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in  
Spain,

Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in  
vain,

And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles  
back the blade . . .

*(But Don John of Austria rides home from the  
Crusade.)*

*Gilbert Keith Chesterton.*

### THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard,  
Many hammers, busy hammers,  
Beating, shaping, night and day,  
Shaping, beating dust and clay  
To a palace; saw it reared;  
Saw the hammers laid away.

And I listened, and I heard  
Hammers beating, night and day,  
In the palace newly reared,  
Beating it to dust and clay:  
Other hammers, muffled hammers,  
Silent hammers of decay.

*Ralph Hodgson.*

## ALTER EGO

Who is it that I drag about;  
This carping ever present thing,  
Who splits my purpose, breeding doubt?  
Is he my subject or my king?

Body and soul we well may be,  
But which am 'I' and which is 'he'?

Some day, they say, I shall escape,  
And looking down from the high sky,  
Shall see below in finite shape  
Divorced by death, this other I:

And know on that transcendant day  
That I was spirit, he was clay.

Yet—what if mine the part to lie  
Cast off, out worn, and viewed with loathing,  
To rot where he has flung me by,  
Glad to be rid of his smirched clothing?

If he were greater, none the less,  
And I below *his* consciousness?

*Kenneth H. Ashley.*

## PULVIS ET UMBRA

Along the crowded streets I walk and think  
How I, a shadow, pace among the shades,  
For I and all men seem to be unreal:  
Foam that the seas of God which cover all  
Cast on the air a moment, shadows thrown  
In moving westward by the Moon of Death.

Oh, shall it set at last, that orb of Death?  
May any morning follow? As I think,  
From one surmise upon another thrown,  
My very thoughts appear to me as shades—  
Shades, like the prisoning self that bounds them all,  
Shades, like the transient world, and as unreal.

But other hours there be when I, unreal,  
When only I, vague in a conscious Death,  
Move through the mass of men unseen by all;  
I move along their ways, I feel and think,  
Yet am more light than echoes, or the shades  
That hide me, from their stronger bodies thrown.

And better moments come when, overthrown  
All round me, lie the ruins of the unreal  
And momentary world, as thin as shades;

When I alone, triumphant over Death,  
Eternal, vast, fill with the thoughts I think,  
And with my single soul the frame of all.

Ah, for a moment could I grasp it all  
Ah, could but I (poor wrestler often thrown)  
Once grapple with the truth, oh then, I think,  
Assured of which is living, which unreal,  
I would not murmur though among the shades  
My lot were cast, among the shades and Death.

"One thing is true," I said, "and that is Death,"  
And yet it may be God disproves it all;  
And Death may be a passage from the shades,  
And films on our beclouded senses thrown;  
And Death may be a step beyond the Unreal  
Towards the Thought that answers all I think.

In vain I think. O moon-like thought of Death,  
All is unreal beneath thee, uncertain all,  
Dim moon-ray thrown along a world of shades!

*A. Mary F. Robinson.*

## THE SOUL OF MAN

In the soul of man there are many voices,  
That silence wakens and sound restrains:  
A song of love, that the soul rejoices,  
With windy music, and murmuring rains;

A song of light, when the dawn arises,  
And earth lies shining, and wet with dew;  
And life goes by, in a myriad guises,  
Under a heaven of stainless blue.

The willows, bending over the river,  
Where the water ripples between the reeds,  
Where the shadows sway, and the pale lights quiver  
On floating lily, and flowing weeds,

Have whispering voices, soft as showers  
Of April falling on upland lawns,  
On the nodding harebell, and pale wind-flowers,  
Through silver evens, and golden dawns.

But softer than love, and deeper than longing  
Are the sweet, frail voices of drifting ghosts;  
In the soul of man they are floating, thronging  
As wind-blown petals, pale, flickering hosts.

*Frederic Manning.*

TO KEATS

On a magical morning, with twinkling feet,  
And a song at his lips that was strange and sweet,  
Somebody new came down the street  
    To the world's derision and laughter.

Now he is dumb with no more to say,  
Now he is dead and taken away,  
Silent and still and leading the way,  
    And the world come tumbling after.

*Lord Dunsany.*

### THE COMING POET

"Is it far to the town?" said the poet,  
As he stood 'neath the groaning vane,  
And the warm lights shimmered silver  
On the skirts of the windy rain.  
"These are those who call me," he pleaded,  
"And I'm wet and travel sore."  
But nobody spoke from the shelter,  
And he turned from the bolted door.

And they wait in the town for the poet  
With stones at the gates, and jeers,  
But away on the wolds of distance  
In the blue of a thousand years  
He sleeps with the age that knows him,  
In the clay of the unborn, dead,  
Rest at his weary insteps,  
Fame at his crumbled head.

*Francis Ledwidge.*

### TO ALL MINOR POETS

My brothers, who have plucked the flowers of  
rhyme  
And strewn them on the highways thick and fast,  
The blossoms of a moment that we cast  
Shall lie forgotten for a long, long time:  
Till all we said, and all we thought about  
Grows quaint and strange, and all our life has past  
For ever from the earth. And when at last  
Some lover of old songs shall draw us out  
From the great rubbish-heap of time, to please  
His fancy with an age unlike his own,  
And set us tenderly upon his shelves,  
We shall be so transformed and overgrown  
By subtle workings of the centuries,  
I think that we shall hardly know ourselves.

*Roger Heath.*

## THE FOOL

The madman wandering head in air  
About the mustard fields  
Sees hosts of flying angels there  
With golden spears and shields;  
The fool, the fool men pity and despise,  
The brain-sick fool, with wonder stricken eyes.

He cannot hold his mind to earth,  
He lives in heaven all day;  
Bright sunlit spirits in their mirth  
Flit round about his way.  
The fool, the fool stands happy for an hour  
To see an angel in a common flower.

He cannot see the wild-rose tree,  
He cannot see the stone;  
Strange presences around him be,  
He never goes alone.  
The fool, the fool who walks the lanes at night,  
Feels a warm love enwrap him round like light.

He wanders where the poppies grow  
Red-flaming in the sun;  
The racing winds against him blow,  
A living voice each one.—  
The fool, the fool has wit enough to find  
God's whisper in the passing of the wind.

*E. G. Morice.*

## THE OLD

Surely they know, the old;  
The years have made them wise.  
What secrets do they hold  
Within their tired eyes?

With many a differing tongue  
Long trained in wordy strife  
Hear while they tell the young  
The mystery of life.

Some trod the road marked "Straight,"  
Scorning the pleasant plains.  
Their love has changed to hate,  
Seeing their little gains.

Yet, envious, they would keep  
Their followers therein,  
Mumbling in senile sleep  
"Death is the wage of sin."

Some chose the fairer way  
Where love and beauty rove.  
Now, sick at heart, they say:  
"We know not Lust from Love,

"And Beauty mates with shame  
And early dreams have died.  
What secret should we name?  
We know the world is wide."

And some have followed Truth:  
Shaking with cynic mirth  
They croak: "Not here, O youth,  
Nor anywhere on earth."

Who toiled for fame or gold  
Speak tonelessly or slow:  
"We? But we are not old;  
Our souls died long ago."

All yearn for life beyond  
The unknown gate of Death.  
Yet, God, what men more fond  
Than old men of their breath?

O youth, they do not know!  
You tread a lonely road.  
No other soul can show  
Where lies your soul's abode.

*H. Ross.*

## REMORSE

Throughout her round of common days  
She conquered selfish, vain desire,  
And, fed from out her spirit's fire,  
The lamp of service lit her ways.

And we who were her only care  
In grief or laughter, ill or good,  
We gave her little gratitude,  
Of praise we left her unaware.

But when we knew that she was dead,  
Then rose the unacknowledged years  
Of toil before us, and our tears  
Were bitter for the words unsaid.

The sun she loved, and singing birds  
And blossoms on the summer trees,  
She gained more gladness out of these  
Than ever came from human words.

To-day the sun is on her grave,  
But she is gone beyond the sun.  
And does she know how late begun  
We speak of her as good and brave?

With God we plead for this alone,  
That she may know our long regret,  
That she may hear the praises yet  
Of hearts that hunger to atone.

*Nancy Pollok.*

## LOVE'S MADNESS

Well, so it is: the thing I had  
Was fit to make the world run mad:  
It was a splendor so intense  
It smote my sins to innocence,  
And through men's mist of fears and lies  
Clove one clear pathway to the skies.

Such was the race I might have run;  
Such was the palm I might have won;  
Such was the light, the flame, the flower:  
And in a day and in an hour  
I took it as not fit to take  
And spent it for a woman's sake.

I cannot think she did not pay  
The worth of any hour or day:  
She could not know, she could not guess,  
The world's loss or my loneliness,  
But paid for all (O just and wise)  
With the least laughter of her eyes.

And if an angel came in tears  
And proffered me my wasted years,  
And spread before my feet anew  
The race to run, the deed to do,  
With all things sweet and all things strange  
—I would not change, I would not change!

*Gerald Gould.*

## EMBARKMENT

Useless, and cast like seaweed on the shore,  
Where children yet may find it in their play,  
Lies my discarded Book of yesterday  
(Of yesterday, and all that came before);  
And only yesterday, I prized it more  
Than nun her missal when she goes to pray,  
And through its pages let my fancy stray  
Among enchanted realms of mystic lore.

And often, with eyes kindling from the tale,  
I seemed to view strange pageantries unfurl,  
Bright phantom banners in a phantom breeze . . .  
But that is past; and now, tumultuous seas  
Shout to the far horizon, and I hurl  
My ship upon the waters, and set sail.

*Maisie Bell Whyte.*

## YOUTH'S IMMORTALITIES

The Abbey's three tall towers  
Behold the tides of men  
Flow from their silent waters  
To seas beyond their ken;  
They gazed on us, my brothers,  
And we were happy then.

Our footsteps, oh my brothers,  
In pleasant paths were set,  
With pleasures to remember,  
And sorrows to forget,  
Deep draughts of love and laughter,  
A cup without regret.

In days of joyous labor  
And golden leisure hours,  
We spent the spring of living,  
Chequered with sun and showers,  
And grew to manhood's measure  
Beneath the three grey towers.

Our battle still was distant  
And faint the drum and fife,  
Yet we knew the flush of conquest  
And the virile joys of strife,  
And fingers dimly groping  
Came near the key of life.

And bells on summer evenings,  
Like a peal of silver tears  
For beauty sadly wandering  
Among the misty years,  
Woke the stirring soul within us  
To speak of hopes and fears.

Hopes for life's great adventure,  
And for a world set free;  
Fear in a dim foreknowledge  
Of wanderings to be,  
Hearing on sunny uplands  
The sound of storm at sea.

And often, in hushed voices  
We talked the night away,  
With speech of all the wonders  
That lie too deep for day,  
Till morning faintly flushing  
Rose from her couch of grey.

Time is the strong destroyer  
Of most that Heaven sends,  
And cherished treasures daily  
Draw to their destined ends,  
But youth shall live for ever  
In the trusty grip of friends.

*William Noel Hodgson.*

### THE MEETING

As I went through the ancient town,  
Long lost and found once more,  
Oh, who is this in a green gown  
I knew so well of yore?

Veils of enchantment hid the place,  
Hung every street and square:  
I felt the sea-wind in my face  
And ruffling in my hair.

Oh town I loved so well and lost,  
And find again with tears,  
Your streets hold many a darling ghost  
And all the vanished years!

My heart went singing a low song,  
Glad to be home again.  
But who is this comes blithe and young,  
Not feared of life but fain?

Oh, who is this comes cold as stone  
To my quick cry and call?  
Of all the faces loved and flown  
I knew her best of all.

“Stay, you are . . .” Is she deaf and blind  
Or hath she quite forgot?  
What chill is in the sun, the wind,  
Because she knows me not?

As I went down—my eyes were wet—  
Eager and stepping fast  
That was my own sweet youth I met  
Who knew me not and passed.

*Katherine Tynan.*

## IN THE GLOAMING

### I ABOVE

"In the gloaming—O! my Darling, when the lights  
are dim and low,  
And the quiet shadows falling, softly come and  
softly go,  
And the winds are sobbing faintly with a gentle  
unknown woe,  
Will you think of me, and love me, as you once did,  
long ago?

In the gloaming—O! my Darling,  
When the merry song is stilled,  
And your voices sink to whispers  
And the thought your heart has thrilled  
All day long 'neath jest and laughter  
Rises, and your eyes are filled  
With bitter tears for my last face,  
Think only of a trust fulfilled.

In the gloaming—O! my Darling, think not bitterly  
of me;  
Though I passed away in silence, left you lonely,  
set you free:  
For my heart was crushed with longing, what had  
been could never be,  
It was best to leave you quickly, best for you and  
best for me."

## II BELOW

"In the gloaming—O! my Darling, when the quiet  
    shadows fall,  
And my lone heart in its sadness seemeth aching  
    to call  
To the sobbing winds that echo only deepening  
    pain and thrall,  
I will answer through life's darkness, trusting love  
    to fathom all.

In the gloaming, O! my Darling,  
Your brave trust shall be fulfilled  
Though I shrink beneath my smiling  
And my longing eyes are filled  
With those saddest tears that fall not,  
I shall rouse me as you willed,  
I shall bear me in life's working  
Nobly till my grief is stilled.

In the gloaming—O! my Darling, I shall think—  
    not bitterly—  
Of your passing from me silent, judging with true  
    fealty  
Love the highest and the purest in the silence to be  
    strong,  
Till beyond the gates we clasp each other freed  
    from earthly wrong."

*Meta Orred.*

## SONG

(From "Hassan")

How splendid in the morning glows the lily; with  
    what grace he throws  
His supplication to the rose: do roses nod the head,  
    Yasmin?  
But when the silver dove descends, I find the little  
    flower of friends,  
Whose very name that sweetly ends, I say when I  
    have said, Yasmin.  
The morning light is clear and cold; I dare not in  
    that light behold  
A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed,  
    Yasmin.  
But when the deep red eye of day is level with the  
    lone highway,  
And some to Mecca turn to pray, and I toward thy  
    bed, Yasmin.  
Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like  
    a soul aswoon,  
And harping planets talk love's tune with milky  
    wings outspread, Yasmin,  
Shower down thy love, O burning bright! for one  
    night or the other night  
Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered  
    flowers are dead, Yasmin!

*James Elroy Flecker.*

## SONG

My love is like a dark tree

Whose roots grow strong and deep;  
And all day long, protectingly,  
His wide arms fling the winds from me  
Or sift the sun-gold gallantly  
For me to catch and keep.

My love is like a King's tree

Royally flourishing;  
And even his fallen leaves shall be  
Rich patterns on the path of me,  
When light fades from the utmost sea  
And birds forget to sing.

*Maisie Bell Whyte.*

## SONG

Thoughts timorous as the swift deer's shadow pass  
    Before your eyes,  
Light as the breath that whispers in the grass  
    And whispering dies.

Your mind is a blue dancing butterfly  
    Beyond my reach;  
A wild thing wheeling with the seagulls by  
    A windy beach.

It is a long weed waving, dimly seen  
    Beneath a stream;  
A cuckoo calling in a wood between  
    Waking and dream.

*L. A. G. Strong.*

### TRIOLET

To lay upon thy quiet grave  
I bring no flowers belovéd heart:  
My fairest blooms I did not save  
To lay upon thy quiet grave.  
Love's blossoms unto thee I gave  
Freely before thou didst depart.  
To lay upon thy quiet grave.  
I bring no flowers belovéd heart.

*Bertha Annakin.*

## REFUGE

As in the tales of wonder, known of old,  
Some mariner would find his heart's desire—  
An island of pure peace, a town of gold  
Set on the splendid hilltop, spire on spire;  
And there, far from the long waves' lonely swell,  
His anchored ship in harbor cool and deep,  
This tired adventurer a space would dwell  
Where waking held more dreams than mortal sleep;  
So I have hours of wonder, when I gain  
Your Presence; and your soul, remote and still,  
Waits, an enchanted refuge from all pain,  
But further than that city on the hill!  
And I, storm tossed and weary, rest awhile,  
As in the peace of that far, fairy isle.

*Vera I. Arlett.*

## HAVEN

I have come home at last; the port is still  
And evening winds foretell a deep, hushed night.  
O, if you only knew how strong the will  
That captained me, how faint and far the light!  
Here, now at peace, I think of bitter seas,  
With skies a hopeless black; mad winds that fled  
Shrieking the storm's tormented ecstasies,  
And darkened every light that lay ahead.  
Yet lonely on my soul's long, level wave  
The mornings rose, the yellow sunsets died;  
And many were the un-named thoughts I gave  
Into the soundless depth below that tide.  
But now, the moorings of your peace hold fast,—  
Most patient watcher, I am home at last.

*Vera I. Arlett.*

### "BETWEEN"

I have not reached the other side of Care,  
Nor felt the comfort of the sun-warmed air  
And the soft breaths of those that flourish there.

I cannot tread the span that lies between;  
My eyes are unaccustomed to the sheen,  
My faltering feet to rainbow-bridged ravine.

Only I strain to see beyond this place  
Your lips, your eyes, the Soul within your face,  
That draws my Spirit into Infinite Space.

*Joan Warburg.*

## ACHIEVEMENT

If we had sought adventurously the stars,  
Or snared some wandering angel with a song,  
Or healed men's hearts of fear, the world of wars,  
Death of its sting, and love of half its wrong;

If we had lifted an imperious name  
Beyond the narrow bounds of mortal mood,  
Fanning with the quick impulse of our fame  
The crawling moments of the multitude:—

*Then* were there cause for pride—*then* might we  
dare

To claim some bright, extravagant reward  
Beyond the reach of Time.—Alas! our boast

Is only that one day was wholly fair,  
When beechen leaves cast patterns on green sward,  
—One day in Spring. All other days are lost.

*Margaret Sackville.*

## THE BALLAD OF CAMDEN TOWN

I walked with Maisie long years back  
The streets of Camden town,  
I splendid in my suit of black,  
And she divine in brown.

Hers was a proud and noble face,  
A secret heart, and eyes  
Like water in a lonely place  
Beneath unclouded skies.

A bed, a chest, a faded mat,  
And broken chairs a few,  
Were all we had to grace our flat  
In Hazel Avenue.

But I could walk to Hampstead Heath,  
And crown her head with daisies,  
And watch the streaming world beneath,  
And men with other Maisies.

When I was ill and she was pale  
And empty stood our store,  
She left the latchkey on its nail,  
And saw me nevermore.

Perhaps she cast herself away  
Lest both of us should drown:  
Perhaps she feared to die, as they  
Who die in Camden Town.

What came of her? The bitter nights  
Destroy the rose and lily,  
And souls are lost among the lights  
Of painted Piccadilly.

What came of her? The river flows  
So deep and wide and stilly,  
And waits to catch the fallen rose  
And clasp the broken lily.

I dream she dwells in London still  
And breathes the evening air,  
And often walk to Primrose Hill  
And hope to meet her there.

Once more together we will live,  
For I will find her yet:  
I have so little to forgive;  
So much, I can't forget.

*James Elroy Flecker.*

### CROSS ROADS

Where two roads meet she waits, her straining eyes  
Bent on the far horizon. On one hand  
The way winds through a pleasant, smiling land  
And Wisdom beckons there. The other lies  
Mid realms of troubled splendor: summits rise  
In storm-swept purity: Love takes his stand  
Upon a chasm's brink. His eyes command  
But he keeps silence. Still she waits and sighs.  
Since God made man we women thus have stood,  
With bursting heart, and weary, weary brain  
To make that choice which falls to womanhood.  
The way of ease or rugged path of pain?  
Ah see, her choice is made Her lips respond  
To Love's embrace. She will not look beyond.

*E. M. Kelly.*

IF BEAUTY CAME TO YOU

If Beauty came to you,  
    Ah, would you know her grace,  
And could you in your shadowed prison view  
    Unscathed her face?

Stepping as noiselessly  
    As moving moth-wings, so  
Might she come suddenly to you or me  
    And we not know.

Amid these clangs and cries,  
    Alas, how should we hear  
The shy, dim-woven music of her sighs  
    As she draws near,

Threading through monstrous, black  
    Uncharitable hours,  
Where the soul shapes its own abhorred rack  
    Of wasted powers?

*William Kean Seymour.*

### THE BLACKBIRD

Evening over fields of cloud  
In sombre beauty came,  
Washing the slumbering trees with mist  
And the tall spires with flame.

Then from one of the still trees  
Like drops that run along  
The glossy faces of green leaves,  
Fell a blackbird's song:

And Memory opened dreaming eyes  
And the pale ghosts stirred,  
And heaven and earth went down before  
The soft note of a bird.

For as the hidden blackbird spoke  
Out of the leafy tree,  
One long and shining wave-crest broke  
Along a secret sea.

*Martin Armstrong.*

## LINES ON A BULLFINCH, FREED

Who once was held in durance vile  
Now flits among the leafy trees;  
Nor wit, nor will, nor food, nor guile  
May lure him back to captive ease.

Where finches throng in buoyant flight  
He dips and rises with the rest,  
And the warm amber of the light  
Flushes the ruby of his breast.

Among the cool of willow sedge,  
Where grasses droop a tawny seed,  
We mark him by the river's edge  
His light weight balanced on a reed.

And it may be the while we watch  
In silence from a drifting boat,  
Hid in the leaves our ear shall catch  
The small perfection of his note.

Then let him thieve the garden still,  
A blessèd bird beyond our reach,  
With all the ebon of his bill  
Bright with the nectar of the peach.

And through a wealth of ransomed days  
Let him uplift his wings to fly,  
And let his be the woodland ways  
And the wide places of the sky.

*Pamela Tennant.*

## HUNTING SONG

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,  
It sounds from hill to hill,  
It pierces to the secret place  
Where we are lying still,  
And one of us the quarry is,  
And one of us must go  
When through the arches of the wood  
We hear the dread horn blow.

A huntsman bold is Master Death,  
And reckless does he ride,  
And terror's hounds with bleeding fangs  
Go baying at his side.  
And will it be a milk white doe  
Or little dappled fawn,  
Or will it be an antlered stag  
Must face the icy dawn?

Or will it be a golden fox  
Must leap from out his lair,  
Or where the trailing shadows pass  
A merry romping hare?  
The hunt is up, the horn is loud  
By plain and covert side,

And one must run alone, alone,  
When Death abroad does ride.

But idle 'tis to crouch in fear  
Since Death will find you out.  
Then up and hold your head erect  
And pace the wood about,  
And swim the stream, and leap the wall,  
And race the starry mead,  
Nor feel the bright teeth in your flank  
Till they be there indeed.

For in the secret hearts of men  
Are peace and joy at one,  
There is a pleasant land where stalks  
No darkness in the sun,  
And through the arches of the wood  
Do break like silver foam  
Young laughter and the noise of flutes  
And voices singing home.

*Sylvia Lynd.*

## SEA CAVES

I came at the ebb of the calling tide  
Where wandered surges roam,  
And a Dead Thing paced with me side by side  
And laughed at the whispering foam;  
He flung the ghost of a broken toy  
At the heels of the moaning sea,  
And his laugh was the laugh of a buried joy  
That broke the heart of me.

I fled the length of the gleaming sands  
And the Dead Thing went before,  
Till I stayed at the edge of the Sorrowful Lands  
Where the black rocks leave the shore;  
And all around was the soft sweet flood  
And the lap of the crooning swell,  
On the farthest rock the Dead Thing stood  
And chanted the Dead Thing's spell;

Till away beyond a mermaid sang,  
On the crest of the waiting sea,  
And shoreward, shoreward her music rang  
Like a dream of harmony.  
For its lilt was ever of green sea-caves  
Where fossilled memories lie,

And peace is over the sand-strewn graves,  
And Dead Things really die.

I crept and gazed at the sea-caves green  
As I knelt at the Dead Thing's side  
With a thousand fathoms of peace between  
And the lure of the calling tide.  
And there as the sea-maid ceased to sing  
On the crest of the waiting sea  
I saw her stand where the sea-weeds swing  
Round the graves of memory.

*Madeline Nightingale.*

## THE GREAT SHIPS

I wonder if the great ships  
Are coming o'er the bar  
With the West Wind in their rigging,  
From unseen lands afar,  
And if they slowly sail on  
The rayless waters flowing  
By the gates of a city I love well,  
And where I would be going.

For I am as the great ships  
And on the tide of life  
Go forth to unknown places  
And ne'er find rest but strife,  
And in a human ocean  
'Mid isles of brick and stone,  
Past ports and lands I know not,  
I sail through seas unknown.

I wonder if the great ships  
Are crowding into port,  
With mournful sirens wailing  
As though from sea they brought  
The terror of their conflict  
Which holds them as they creep  
From highways of the ocean  
And wonders of the deep.

For I am as the great ships,  
And sailing in a sea  
Where chartless souls are moving  
On human tides—to me  
Comes thought of lands of twilight  
And ports of rest where lie  
The weary ships unchartered  
Beneath an evening sky.

I wonder if the great ships  
Creep up at break of dawn,  
The seagulls round their rigging,  
Grey-winged, with cries forlorn;  
Those ships and birds sail ever  
Through dreams of mine that are  
Of lone lands in the twilight  
And the sunset o'er the bar

*Cecil Roberts.*

## A SUMMER NIGHT

The crescent moon sinks slowly down  
And, seeming to my fancy's eye  
A silver gallery in the sky,  
Hangs low above the sleeping town;

Hangs low above the little bay,  
Touching the dancing waves with light,  
Where once on such a summer night  
Perchance some Viking warship lay.

Far out with measured stroke and slow,  
A boat is drawing to the shore;  
I hear the creaking of the oar  
And distant voices deep and low.

Then closing eyes I seem to hear  
The old sea-rover's boats that slip  
From out the shadow of the ship  
In some old, long-forgotten year,

When towering o'er the moonlit deep  
Came the long dragons of the North,  
And the fierce sons of Thor stole forth  
To fall upon the town in sleep.

Here where the quiet moonbeams stray  
Across the beach and up the street,

Was heard the tread of sudden feet  
With clash of steel and war horns' bray.

The startled watchman, catching breath  
Even with the white blade at his throat,  
Blew loud and clear one warning note,—  
And found his swift reward in death.

Then shriek and shout and clash of brand,  
Wild cries of triumph and despair,  
Borne on the fragrant summer air  
Echoed about the shuddering land;

Echoed, and sank and died away,  
And silence held the night again,  
Save for the oarsmen's wild refrain  
As the long ship swept down the bay.

Across the starlit silence drew  
A formless shadow, and below  
Pale tongues of light shot to and fro  
Now gleaming red, now ghastly blue,

Till flushed the sky with lurid red  
As leaped to heaven the sudden fire,  
Wrapping in one vast funeral pyre  
The blood-stained streets and quiet dead.

And still the waves went murmuring  
The pebbled beaches far along  
That wonderful and world-old song  
Which here to-night I hear them sing.

. . . . .

The moon is gone, a rosy gleam  
Is brightening in the Eastern sky,  
The blood and flame of days gone by  
Have vanished with my waking dream.

*Duncan J. Robertson.*

## A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

To-Night in Dreamland who can rest?

We hear on the night wind falling,  
Over the hills in the dim, dark West,  
The horn of a huntsman calling.

"Follow!" the horn of the huntsman cries;  
On the wind over plain and hollow  
A voice from the tarn where Echo lies  
Dreamily answers, "Follow!"

We hear the far-off horn, we come,  
Into the forest sweepeth

The wild white chase of waters dumb

Where the fern and the hemlock sleepeth.  
Who knows the form of the thing that flies?  
Hath it feet? Hath it wings like a swallow?  
Who cares? The horn of the hunter cries  
To the shadowy huntsmen, "Follow!"

The third cock crows, the dawn wind blows,  
The beams of morning quiver;  
Down vale and glade the huntsmen fade  
Like mists upon the river.

Whilst o'er the streams and hills of dreams  
Die horn and hunting halloa,  
Far, far away where night nor day  
Nor hound nor horse, may follow.

*Henry De Vere Stacpoole.*

## THE BIRD ON YGDRASIL

In the blowing tops of Ygdrasil,  
Over the Astral sea,  
My spirit like a splendid bird  
Sings in infinity.  
Sometimes I hear the psalm he sings:  
With baby words I try  
To sing in time that boundless rhyme  
Beneath this little sky.

On the dazzling trees of Ygdrasil,  
In God's vast summer day—  
Where sits the seven-horned triple sun  
That lights the Milky Way,  
My spirit on the blossomed bough  
In sapphire climes unknown,  
'Mid streaming glory, gazes down  
On this dull flesh and bone.

Sometimes I feel his favouring smile  
On that high perch afar,  
And smiling up the bowery sky  
I hail him from my star,  
And ponder in this puny world  
With pigmy thoughts of mine  
How this poor gipsy-sprite dare claim  
A relative so fine.

On the dizzy heights of Ygdrasil  
In my lord's boundless gaze  
The earth looks like a diamond bright  
With its twinkling years and days:  
Oh! dearest of the petalled stars  
That dance on all the tree  
To him this sparkling bud of heaven  
That folds the heart of me.

On the deathless tree of Ygdrasil  
When the hymning tempest rings  
My spirit rides the ranging boughs,  
And spreads his rainbow wings;  
And down the lustrous whirlwind's breath,  
Where flaring comets stream,  
He wafts that mystic merriment  
That wakes me when I dream.

Far on that golden-fruited Tree,  
In the everlasting rays  
The spirit sits that whets my wits  
And glorifies my days:  
Oh, scarce know I—mixed mud and sky,  
If bird or seraph he  
Who lights me with that glittering eye  
In blue eternity.

*James A. Mackereth.*

## THE CITY OF SLEEP

Manikin, maker of dreams,  
Came to the city of sleep:  
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred,  
And the moat was deep.

'Who is on my side, who?'  
Moonbeams rose in a row:  
He tuned them loud betwixt town and cloud  
But his voice was low.

He sang a song of the moon  
For loan of her silver beams;  
Misty and fair, and afloat in air,  
Lay the ladder of dreams.

He harped by river and hill;  
And the river forgot to flow,  
And the wind in the grass forgot to pass,  
And the grass to grow.

He harped to the heart of earth  
Where honey in hive lies sweet:  
And that sound leapt through the gates, and crept  
Through the silent street.

Manikin, maker of dreams,  
He pursed his lips to pipe:  
And the strange and the new grew near and true,  
For the time was ripe.

He piped to the hearts of men:  
And dreamers rose up straight,  
To drift unbarred by the drowsy guard,  
And beyond the gate.

He piped the dream of the maid:  
And her heart was up and away;  
And fast it beat and hurried her feet  
To the gates of day.

He piped the dream of the mother,  
The cry of her babe for food:  
And she rose from rest and gave it the breast  
And that was good!

He piped the dream of the child:  
And into its hands and feet  
Came tunes to play of the live-long day;  
And that was sweet!

He piped to the heart of youth:  
And the heart of youth had sight  
Of love to be won, and a race to be run;  
And that was right!

He piped the song of age:  
And that was a far-off song,—

When life made haste and the mouth could taste:—  
But that was wrong!

Manikin, maker of dreams,  
Had piped himself to sleep:  
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred,  
And the moat was deep!

*Laurence Housman.*

### THE LEADER

The sword fell down: I heard a knell;  
I thought that ease was best,  
And sullen men that buy and sell  
Were host: and I was guest.  
All unashamed I sat with swine,  
We shook the dice for war,  
The night was drunk with an evil wine—  
But she went on before.

*She rode a steed of the sea-foam breed,  
All faery was her blade,  
And the armour on her tender limbs  
Was of the moonshine made.*

By God that sends the master-maids,  
I know not whence she came,  
But the sword she bore to save the soul  
Went up like an altar flame  
Where a broken race in a desert place  
Call on the Holy Name.

*We strained our eyes in the dim day-rise,  
We could not see them plain;  
But two dead men from Valmy fen  
Rode at her bridle-rein.*

I hear them all, my fathers call,  
I see them how they ride,  
And where had been that rout obscene  
Was an army straight with pride.  
A hundred thousand marching men,  
Of squadrons twenty score,  
And after them all the guns, the guns,  
But she went on before.

*Her face was like a king's command  
When all the swords are drawn.  
She stretched her arms and smiled at us,  
Her head was higher than the hills.  
She led us on to endless plains.  
We lost her in the dawn.*

*Hilaire Belloc.*

## BALLAD OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY

To men who dwell in southern shires  
And breathe the air of down,  
I'll tell a tale that few have heard  
In village or in town.

And he who listens while I tell,  
Here must he stand with me,  
Where every wind that stirs the turf  
Must first have crossed the sea.

Long years ago, before the downs  
Became the curse of men,  
There came a rider on his horse,  
And both were bold as ten.

They galloped right the length of down,  
And laughed, both man and beast:  
Then sudden to the east-shore came,  
Yet recked not in the least,

But round they wheeled to right-about,  
With neither look nor jest,  
And hence, and o'er our springy turf,  
Rode back towards the west.

And when they came to Ladyholt  
They laughed and turned again,

And wheeled about to right about,  
Not caring why or when.

And still they ride, to east, to west,  
The bare-backed slopes of down,  
Though few have seen a man in green,  
Or horse of earthen brown.

But stand beside that golden patch  
Where flames the laughing gorse,  
And tell me if you do not hear  
The gallop of a horse.

Some days you'll hear it coming aft,  
And sometimes on before,  
From east to west, from west to east,  
Along the southern shore.

And who among our southern men  
Would glory in the down,  
Must get astride and out and ride  
A steed of earthen brown.

*E. A. Fielder.*

## ORIELDA

Sweet Orielda from the stars  
    Stole down to earth again,  
And burst the bright celestial bars,  
    To ease a lover's pain.

She sought him by the woodland ways  
    They once for trysting knew,  
Where now, with sorrow all a-daze,  
    He walked the dark night through.

The lovelight in her eyes did shine,  
    She softly breathed his name,  
And on his face a look divine  
    Of joy seraphic came.

The Heaven from which her soul had sped  
    Was very pure and high,  
On earth they never could have wed—  
    No more she wondered why.

What Orielda said that night  
    I guess, but may not tell;  
Brief words she spoke with presage bright  
    Of all that soon befell.

At dawn they found her lover dead,  
In restful, radiant guise,  
As one that on a happy bed  
Good dreams a-dreaming lies.

"Set free from strife and earthly jars!"  
They said, but none had spied  
How Orielda from the stars  
Had kissed him as he died.

*Oscar Boulton.*

## A DEAD POET

(James Elroy Flecker)

Weave for his brow the laurel wreath, he lies  
For ever dumb, the lips that sang so well  
Are locked in silence 'neath the alien skies,  
And all the tales are told that he shall tell.

Ah, mourn a little, for his life was sweet,  
And silence is too solemn after song,  
He has gone hence ere men had time to greet  
One who but seldom sang nor tarried long.

So sweet and light his singing, scarcely heard,  
Only the silence touched our ears with sense  
Of something void, as when a fluting bird  
No more breaks on the valley's somnolence.

He has gone hence,—ah, whither! who shall say?  
Perchance he treads the trackless paths of Night,  
Long wearied in the Caravan of Day,  
Perchance he seeks the Gardens of Delight,

And thro' dim-shaded valleys journeys on,  
A moon-led pilgrim seeking for the Thing  
Which dreamers spake of in the days long gone,  
And poets sang of in a Grecian Spring.

It may be he has found those mounts of snow  
All flushed with rose, those glades of endless sleep,  
And knows the truths which many sought to know,  
And wonders now why men grow sick and weep,

Why some are sad, as he was sad in days  
When Beauty was too beautiful and frail,  
When a dear voice was sweet beyond all praise,  
Rising at night-time from a starlit vale.

O nevermore for him the sunset fades,  
Nor ocean lifts her waters to the moon,  
No more his feet shall wander in the glades,  
His soul with mystic rapture deep aswoon;

For him no caravans with sound of bells  
Move from the Syrian cities shadow-dim,  
Nor long-lashed maidens dream by palm-girt wells,  
Their phantom-world is all unknown to him.

He holds a wider converse with the stars,  
And roams unfettered through the jewelled night,  
His song flows in the wind 'mid nenuphars  
Swaying and rustling in the dawning light.

Weave for his brow the laurel, for his name  
What brighter memory than those sweet songs  
Sung in a too-brief life that knew not fame,  
Yet gave this wealth which now to Time belongs!

*Cecil Roberts.*



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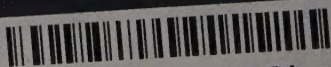






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